

Ask the Expert

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CELEBRATING

40

YEARS

Retreat Directory

Find out where you and yours
can find new places to get away / pgs. 8-9

Recovery,
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May
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2023

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TAKING A DAY TRIP IN MINNESOTA:

Exploring for Relaxation & Recovery

by Jen Shepherd



Are you looking for a unique destination to explore that's within easy reach? Consider taking a day trip to discover the hidden gems in your backyard. With Minnesota and our neighboring states brimming with a wealth of experiences and attractions, you're bound to find something that suits your interests.

Embarking on day trips and experiencing the adventures they bring is something I truly relish. Day trips not only provide a refreshing break from daily routines, but they also promote overall well-being. According to Oxford University Press (2023), a day trip is a "short outing or excursion completed in one day, especially for pleasure or recreation." With this flexibility, you can travel as far or close to home as you like. Essential factors to consider when planning your day trip include the destination, transportation, food options, activity level, stops

along the way, and travel companions.

Day trips offer an affordable way to get away without the need for expensive accommodations or airfare. You can further reduce costs by choosing a nearby destination to save on gas and packing your meals and snacks instead of eating out. Many parks, museums, and attractions offer free or discounted admission, and traveling with friends or family allows for shared expenses. With a little planning, you can have a fun and budget-friendly day trip. You could always consider extending your day trip to a weekend getaway if your budget and schedule permit.

SUPPORTING RECOVERY THROUGH EXCURSIONS

Getting out for an excursion with a change in environment, especially in

DAY TRIP IN MINNESOTA to pg 6



HONORING

Wendy Jones

Minnesota Recovery Connection (MRC), a community-based organization, provides peer-to-peer support, public education, and advocacy for people in addiction recovery. Wendy Jones, MRC's executive director since 2018, will be stepping down from her position this summer. We wanted to hear from Jones about what's she's learned in her role, what still needs work, and vision for the future. We congratulate Jones for a job well done. *See page 14 for our interview with Jones.*

JOHN H. DRIGGS, LICSW

Words to the Wise for Men: How to Pick a Loving Life Mate

Probably the most important decision you will ever make in your lifetime is who to choose as a loving mate. How much you will feel loved and are able to love, how well your children will be raised, how much meaning you find in life and how happy you are well into your later years is pretty much dependent on who you pick to marry and how emotionally close you can be with your life mate. If these aren't good enough reasons for picking carefully I don't know what would be. Aside from the serious reasons for making a good choice there are also joy of life factors that make a good marriage into something really special. When you're married to the right person almost all of the time there will be a bounce in your step, lots of silly laughter and affection no matter how gloomy the storms of life are and you will hardly ever feel alone through the worst of times. Even better when you have a truly emotionally intimate relationship with a spouse you will be challenged throughout life to be better version of yourself and to be told many things about yourself you initially resisted hearing. A good marriage can be the joyful roller coaster ride of a lifetime.

It's necessary to know that finding a special mate is not just about having good luck, although part of it is. Sometimes partners pick us and we think we are the ones making the choice. Most of us bring about good luck by making wise conscious choices in our life. We can bring about our own good luck. However there are special reasons why we men are notoriously bad in finding a mate. Mostly we're unaware of what we're doing. So let's become more aware.

WHY DO WE MEN MAKE UNWISE CHOICES IN FINDING A PARTNER

Too many of us men may want a permanent partner but are emotionally unprepared for a mature relationship and what it takes to maintain a lasting connection with a spouse. We tend to rely on our financial status and good looks alone to think we're ready for a committed relationship. Women often joke among themselves about how we don't know what we're doing and how they will have us believe that

WORDS TO THE WISE FOR MEN to pg 12



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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Discover

by Louise Elowen



"The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes."

MARCEL PROUST

For the past three years, we have been limited in what we can discover by way of travel, either locally or further afield. However, it now seems that things are slowly re-emerging, either as before or in a new way.

A retreat is one way of discovering: Ourselves or new places. I have been somewhat reluctant to travel or go much further than my own garden these past few years but as we entered a new year, back in January, I felt like I had mentally turned a corner and was ready to go on a voyage of discovery once again. I started off locally – a lunch out felt like a novel idea after so long – but I now have trips planned domestically later this year, and internationally next year. International is a huge one – something I have not done in over twelve years. So, what do all these various journeys mean for me?

Travel to me is a voyage of discovery. A chance to retreat from my “usual routine.” Meet new people, make new friends, and learn new interests. Just see things in a different way than my usual routine. Travel is a way of “broadening the mind,” as people are apt to say. But it’s

also a chance to reflect on who I once was and who I am now. *What do I want to do with my life going forward? Am I happy? Are there things I would like to change? Am I inspired by what I see?*

As I just mentioned, even a lunch out with a friend in a local spot can change how I view things, either through conversation or observation of others.

People watching is one of my favorite pastimes, whether it is at the local Home Depot parking lot (a place I passed an hour waiting for pick up recently), at an airport, or sitting on a park bench in nature. Observe wildlife in the latter and see how they interact with their surroundings.

I always feel refreshed after such “voyages,” my mind stimulated once again, and ideas start to flow. Sometimes I find that just seeing things through different eyes is all that I need.

I leave you with this question: *What will be your voyage or retreat of discovery this year?*

With dreams of discoveries,

Louise

Sometimes I find that just seeing things through different eyes is all that I need.



The Phoenix Spirit

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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.

PUBLISHERS

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

EDITOR

Louise Elowen
phoenix@thephoenixspirit.com

SALES DIRECTOR

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

COMMUNITY RELATIONS DIRECTOR

Jen Shepherd, MSW, LICSW, CCA
jen@thephoenixspirit.com

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

John H. Driggs,
Mary Lou Logsdon,
Pat Samples, Jen Shepherd

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.

Front page photos, top to bottom, left to right: Great River Bluffs State Park (Explore Minnesota); Itasca State Park fire tower (Kvidt Creative / Explore Minnesota); Minneopa State Park bison, Mankato (Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway).

Bottom photo: Wendy Jones (Wendy Jones)

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Having Had

by **Tina D.**

Just after takeoff from Minneapolis-Saint Paul airport (MSP), a seatmate asked my destination. I was visiting a cousin in Germany. He was on his way home from an Oregon vacation. We were both relaxed and free of the scowls on the faces of business class passengers. Finding common ground with friendly people is a bonus of traveling alone.

“Have you heard of Crater Lake?” he asked intently (but not in a creepy way). “You should go,” he continued, and I heard the words ring. They held odd weight for small talk.

The Crater Lake Lodge is booked many months in advance. It was over a year later when I turned off State Road 138 into the forested park entrance. I checked into a rustic room with no phone or TV, and then hiked a short trail to nearby Garfield Peak where tiny, clicking crickets hid in the rocks until my footsteps stirred them to yellow-winged flight.

It was an inspiring view of the caldera. The crater’s vast rim is 33 miles around the rugged basin. It is the deepest lake in North America; a sacred place to the Klamath people that inspires all who visit. The waters are a destination for modern spirit quests. Far below at the boat landing, seekers braved the cold plunge to commune with “beings” from the icy depths. Opposite the lake, a small desert displayed a multicolored sweep of ancient pumice where a few scrawny trees and scrubby red plants had reclaimed the hard ground. Both lake and desert are the wild remains of Mount Mazama’s eruption over seven thousand years ago, but the sandy expanse was unexpected.

“I like the desert, too,” Beth shared at dinner—that’s what I’ll call her for this story.

She and her husband had traveled from Ohio, and we’d introduced ourselves on the patio. They were curious about my solo travel, and I shared the events that brought me there.

I’m searching for something,” I confided. “But was only able to book one night at the lodge. Tomorrow, I leave, and I don’t even know why I’m here, yet.”

“Maybe you should check at the desk,” she said. “Sometimes there are cancellations.” It was a simple solution. I inquired after dinner and managed to book another day.

There were friendly faces everywhere. That evening, I met two scientists from the Crater Lake Institute: A local botanist who lived in the nearby town of Klamath, and a former park ranger from Tennessee. They’d planned to set up a telescope for the close approach of Mars, but a thunderstorm moved through the Cascades, and we found consolation in a late dessert and park trivia.

“Did you take the boat tour?” the botanist asked.

“No, it was too noisy.”

“The lake is known as the Well of Silence,” he agreed. “Have you visited the Lady of the Woods? Her statue is near the visitor center.”

I made a mental note to look for it. His passion for the park was genuine, and if he thought the statue was important, I did too.

“It’s amazing,” I offered. “How little has changed in seven thousand years.”

1st Person

He gave me a look (a little creepy this time), so I went to find Beth and say goodnight.

“I hope you find out why you’re here,” she said. It felt good to find someone who cared about my journey.

Next morning, I found the Lady of the Woods behind the visitor center. She sat curled within a granite boulder as if seeking shelter from Mazama’s eruption. Lichen covered her back, and there was no interpretive sign to explain her origin. The statue almost looked like a natural formation but was no less moving when I learned it had been sculpted. Park administrators believe the work does not belong in a natural area and consider it artistic vandalism. For me, it was a monument to beauty, but The Lady held no answers.

Back at the lodge, Beth raised more questions about the writing life. Her outlook was plainly religious, so I felt okay talking about my higher power. As a writer, John’s description of “the Word” is a natural fit: “In the beginning was the Word.” A logical Step 2 for my practice.

But the trip was winding down. At sunset, the scientists set up their telescope, and we viewed tiny white smudges that were galaxies larger than the Milky Way. Mars rose around 9 p.m., and it was time to say goodnight. We left thanks for their astronomy with the manager on duty.

The next morning, Beth and her husband would continue down the coast. I had a few more hours to enjoy the park before a drive back to Portland International airport (PDX).

“Why not take a walk in the desert?” she suggested. “There are no cars allowed, but hiking is fine.”

So, I parked near the small expanse on my way out. From the road, I could see a line of green where the pumice turned to grass, and it became my destination over the sand. Halfway across, I noticed a single, tall evergreen among the red plants. Some poetic soul had rolled a boulder into the shadow, and it beckoned me to sit. When I faced the tree, desert sunlight filtered through the boughs. It was not one trunk, but three in one. A trinity branched before me, and grace filled my heart.

Now having had a few years in the program, I’ve learned it’s best not to interpret a spiritual idea too literally—my take on the Word notwithstanding—but the sight made me pause to reconsider my childhood worship. Over the years, “the three” had meshed into one collective consciousness. It would take some work to begin again with a three-part Higher Power (HP). Since the solo trip to Crater Lake, I’ve become more focused on the Spirit as an outward expression of community and care; meeting friendly people and hearing their words with faith a higher power will guide the way.

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Resource Directory

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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 info@silversobriety.org. 651-431-8308.

Substance Use Disorders

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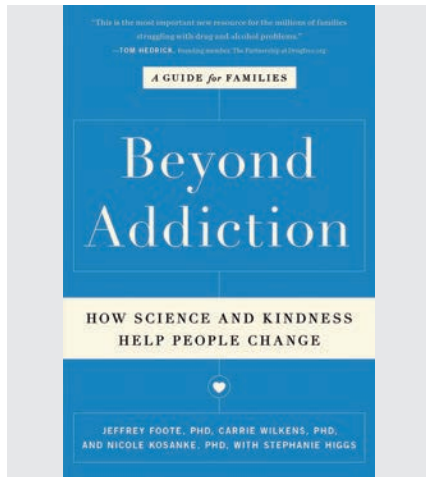
Workaholics Anonymous Meeting

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.

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



Books



Beyond Addiction

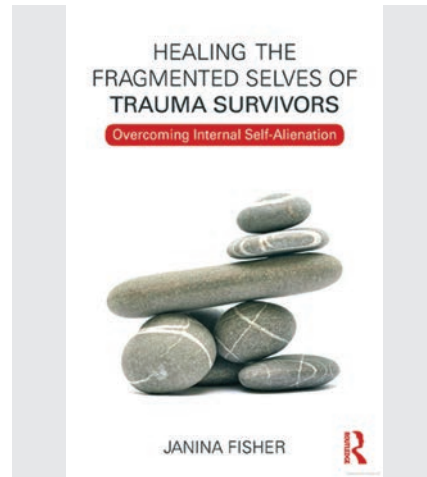
How Science and Kindness Help People Change

By Multiple Authors
SCRIBNER

The groundbreaking method that upends current treatment models and “offers collective hope to families of substance abusers” (*Kirkus Reviews*), helping loved ones conquer addiction and compulsion problems through positive reinforcement and kindness—from the leaders in progressive addiction treatment in the US.

Beyond Addiction goes beyond the theatrics of interventions and tough love to show family and friends how they can use kindness, positive reinforcement, and motivational and behavioral strategies to help someone change. Drawing on forty collective years of research and decades of clinical experience, the authors present the best practical advice science has to offer.

Delivered with warmth, optimism, and humor, *Beyond Addiction* defines a new, empowered role for friends and family and a paradigm shift for the field. This new approach is not only less daunting for both the substance abuser and his family, but is more effective as well. Learn how to use the transformative power of relationships for positive change, guided by exercises and examples.

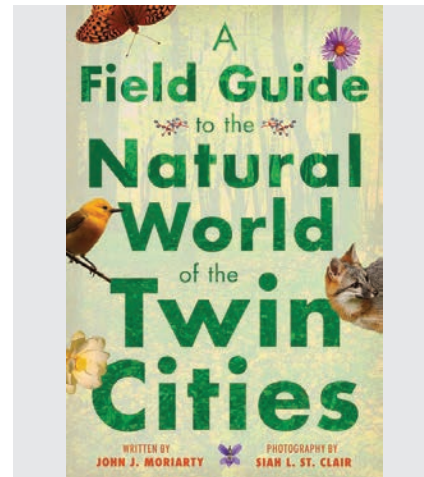


Healing the Fragmented Selves of Trauma Survivors

Overcoming Internal Self-Alienation

By Janina Fisher
ROUTLEDGE

Healing the Fragmented Selves of Trauma Survivors integrates a neurobiologically informed understanding of trauma, dissociation, and attachment with a practical approach to treatment, all communicated in straightforward language accessible to both client and therapist. Readers will be exposed to a model that emphasizes “resolution”—a transformation in the relationship to one’s self, replacing shame, self-loathing, and assumptions of guilt with compassionate acceptance. Its unique interventions have been adapted from a number of cutting-edge therapeutic approaches, including Sensorimotor Psychotherapy, Internal Family Systems, mindfulness-based therapies, and clinical hypnosis. Readers will close the pages of *Healing the Fragmented Selves of Trauma Survivors* with a solid grasp of therapeutic approaches to traumatic attachment, working with undiagnosed dissociative symptoms and disorders, integrating “right brain-to-right brain” treatment methods, and much more. Most of all, they will come away with tools for helping clients create an internal sense of safety and compassionate connection to even their most dis-owned selves.



A Field Guide to the Natural World of the Twin Cities

By John J. Moriarty, Siah L. St. Clair
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA PRESS

Though the Twin Cities and environs have proven a fine habitat for one particular species, the three million humans who call the area home share these 3,000 square miles with myriad animals and plants, all in a mosaic of various ecosystems. While most of the region’s wildlife has lost its original habitat to agriculture and urban development, a significant patchwork of native and restored habitat remains—prairies, woods, and wetlands, along with pockets in the parks and open spaces throughout the cities and suburbs. This easy-to-use guide gives novice and long-time naturalists alike the tools to find and explore these natural places in the metropolitan Twin Cities, some within the city limits and all within an hour’s drive of downtown Minneapolis.

John J. Moriarty is an expert on the remarkable diversity of plants and animals in the region’s habitats, from prairies and savannas to woods and wetlands such as swamps and marshes, to fens and bogs, lakes and rivers, and urban and suburban spots. Including notes on invasive species and a list of references and organizations, this book is a perfect companion and an unparalleled resource for anyone interested in discovering the rich natural world of the Twin Cities.



Button Pusher

By Tyler Page
FIRST SECOND | MACMILLAN

A graphic memoir about Tyler, a child who is diagnosed with ADHD and has to discover for himself how to best manage it.

Tyler’s brain is different. Unlike his friends, he has a hard time paying attention in class. He acts out in goofy, over-the-top ways. Sometimes, he even does dangerous things—like cut up a bus seat with a pocketknife or hang out of an attic window.

To the adults in his life, Tyler seems like a troublemaker. But he knows that he’s not. Tyler is curious and creative. He’s the best artist in his grade, and when he can focus, he gets great grades. He doesn’t want to cause trouble, but sometimes he just feels like he can’t control himself.

In *Button Pusher*, cartoonist and Minnesota-native Tyler Page delves into his childhood experiences and explores what it means to grow up with ADHD. From diagnosis to treatment and beyond, Tyler’s story is raw and enlightening, inviting you to see the world from a new perspective.

Many of the book descriptions are taken from the publishers or promotional releases. 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 and we may include it in an upcoming issue.

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from page 1

nature, helps to support our recovery on multiple levels. There is empirical evidence to support the Attention Restoration Theory and that getting outside in nature can help to increase directed attention, decrease mental fatigue, enhance cognitive restoration, and help with overall stress management (Ohly et al., 2016; Selhub & Logan, 2012).

Wiess (2018) states that addiction is an intimacy disorder that requires healthy attachments and intimate, ongoing connection to support recovery. Dingle et al. (2021) suggest that loneliness is a “potential antecedent to substance use.” (p. 522). By exploring new places and reconnecting with others, one can reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness while creating lasting memories and deepening existing relationships. Taking a day trip with friends, family, or even colleagues, can also provide extra encouragement when trying out new things.

If you're striving for personal growth by conquering your fears and expanding your comfort zone, you may need to seek out specific destinations to help you achieve your goals. For example, if you're afraid of bats or enclosed spaces, visiting the **Mystery Cave at Forestville/Mystery Cave State Park** can provide a safe environment to confront these fears. In addition to the personal accomplishment of pushing your boundaries and discovering new places, you'll also be rewarded with breathtaking views of the underground Turquoise Lake. And while you're there, don't forget to add a hike or take a tour of **Historic Forestville** to make the most of your visit.



FIRE TOWERS, SCENIC OVERLOOKS, AND HIKES

Experience breathtaking views by hiking or driving to scenic overlooks or climbing fire observation towers. Minnesota state parks have five different fire towers open to the public, with some others located throughout the state. The 100-foot fire tower in **St. Croix State Park**, Minnesota's largest state park, provides a thrilling adventure. Climb through the shrub layer, understory, and tree canopy to learn about forest stratification, and when you reach the top, you'll be rewarded with a spectacular 360-degree view of the park. For an educational trip, stop by the **Forest History Center** in Grand Rapids and climb their 100-foot fire tower to learn about the history of Minnesota's forests and lumbering. If you'd like to head

down south, you can visit the **Elba Fire Tower** which is just a 5-minute drive from **Whitewater State Park**. Don't forget to check that the fire towers will be open before visiting.

Discover a fun and rewarding way to explore Minnesota's state parks by joining the Hiking Club and Passport Club. You can join the Hiking Club for around \$15 and get a book with detailed descriptions of designated trails and passwords to find. Hike a certain distance to earn rewards like patches and free camping nights. The Passport Club allows you to collect stamps from each park as well as rewards. Whitewater State Park has great trails and overlooks like Inspiration Point, Chimney Rock, and the Coyote Point Trail. **Frontenac State Park** offers acces-

sible and beautiful views of Lake Pepin. Stop in **Red Wing** and hike the He Mni Can - Barn Bluff trail for an overlook of the Mississippi River. For a foothills-like experience, hike the Kings Bluff Trail at **Great River Bluffs State Park**.

If you're craving an adventure, the north shore is the perfect day trip destination. Take a drive along **Lake Superior** and soak up the stunning scenery, stopping to explore charming towns and hitting the hiking trails along the way. For a sensory experience like no other, visit the fully accessible **Rose Garden** in Duluth, where you'll be treated to sweeping views of Lake Superior, a rainbow of vibrant colors, and the sweet scent of blooming flowers. If you're looking for an ocean vibe, head to **Park Point Beach** and let your

imagination run wild. Then, channel your inner explorer and hike through the **Minnesota Point Pine Forest SNA** to the historic **Minnesota Point Lighthouse** - Duluth's first lighthouse. Feeling ambitious? Set your sights on hiking sections of the **Superior Hiking Trail (SHT)**, starting with the short but sweet out-and-back trail at the southern terminus on the Minnesota-Wisconsin border near **Jay Cooke State Park**, perfect for a day trip.

SPORTS

Looking to add some active fun to your day trip? Consider a round of golf at one of Minnesota's top-rated courses, like **The Quarry at Giants Ridge**, which was named one of the top 100 courses in the country by Golf Digest. If golf isn't



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from page 6



your thing, grab your camera and capture the beauty of the course and your friends' swings. You may even be greeted by a friendly fox during your round. Want to stay closer to the Twin Cities? Rent a bike and explore the trails around **Minnehaha Falls**, or catch a St. Paul Saints or Minnesota Twins game if you're a baseball fan.

Prefer water activities? Try boating, paddling, or swimming on **Lake Minnetonka**, with charter and public cruises available. In **Taylors Falls**, take a scenic paddlewheel boat tour along the St. Croix River, hike the Hiking Club trail at **Interstate State Park**, and witness the world-famous glacial potholes. Cross over to Wisconsin to visit their Interstate State Park and swim at **Lake O' the Dalles**. Outfitters in the area offer kayak and canoe rentals for river paddling.

WORK

Maximize the enjoyment of your business trip by incorporating some leisure activities during your downtime. Not only will this help you unwind and recharge, but it can also enhance your work perfor-

Previous page photos from top to bottom / left to right: Art in the Park, Lanesboro (Lanesboro Arts); Rose Garden, Duluth (Dennis O'Hara /Visit Duluth); New Ulm historic district (Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway); Oxbow Park and Zollman Zoo (Greta Alms); Spring Lake Park Reserve, Hastings (Paul Vincent / Explore Minnesota); Mystery Cave State Park Mystery Cave Turquoise Lake (MN DNR).

This page photos from top:

The Quarry at Giants Ridge (The Phoenix Spirit); The Lavender Barnyard (The Phoenix Spirit); St. Croix State Park fire tower (The Phoenix Spirit).

mance. As a clinical aromatherapist, I've discovered that visiting lavender farms for work can be a fantastic way to boost focus and creativity. Although lavender farms may not be as prevalent in the Midwest, there are still a few gems that you can visit on a day trip from the Twin Cities, such as the ones in Baraboo, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. **The Lavender Barnyard** which is located in Farmington, Minnesota, is the only lavender farm in the state that is fully dedicated to growing lavender. Between May and October, you can schedule a farm tour or even a photo session if you're a photographer. During the harvest season, you can also participate in an instructional session with Marie, the owner, and learn how to create your personalized bouquet of heavenly-scented lavender.

VOLUNTEERING AND SERVICE WORK

Day trips can also involve volunteering or doing service work to give back to the community. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) offers various opportunities for volunteers, such as monitoring rainfall, lake levels, and trails. You can participate in the Adopt-A-WMA program, which has three different levels of involvement and duties, by committing to two years of caring for Wildlife Management Areas (WMA). By doing so, you can ensure future enjoyable day trips for yourself and others. If you prefer to volunteer your time serving people, **HandsOn Twin Cities** can connect you with suitable opportunities based on your skills and availability.

ART

Art festivals and pottery tours offer a fun and engaging way to explore local art and connect with artists. Discover different art styles, techniques, and mediums while enjoying a lively atmosphere with food, music, and activities for all ages. I had an unforgettable experience attending the **Art in the Park** festival in **Lanesboro** with my art teacher friend. En route, don't forget to stop by the **Rochester Art Center**. If you're a fan of pottery, check out the **Cannon River Clay Tour**, where you can visit professional ceramic artists in their studios in the Northfield area.

FOOD

Minnesota is a food lover's paradise with a vast array of dining and dessert options to choose from. Local farms offer fresh produce and local fare, making it a must-visit destination for food enthusiasts. For a delicious sweet treat, head to **MN EIS Ice Cream & Sweets Shoppe** in downtown New Ulm. In Stillwater, **The Oasis Café** offers breakfast and burgers, while **MN Nice Cream** will satisfy your sweet tooth with their specialty cones, including lactose-free and vegan options. While you're there, pick up some fresh

local produce and products at the **River Market Community Co-op**. If you're a fan of herbal teas, **Sacred Blossom Farm's** offerings at your local co-op or Whole Foods Market are a must-try with the Angel blend being a personal favorite. During an annual open house, Farmer Tony offers a tour of his small-scale Wisconsin farm. **Seed Farm** in Northfield hosts a monthly Dinner at the Farm event with local music and a farm-fresh menu. Located in River Falls, Wisconsin, **White Pine Berry Farm** is a perfect destination for seasonal events, like their strawberry shortcake socials, sunflower celebration, and fall family days. The farm's picturesque barn serves as the perfect backdrop for a day of berry picking and it is the ideal destination for anyone looking to enjoy a fun-filled day in the great outdoors. Check out the Minnesota Grown website for a variety of farms that allow visitors to pick their own berries, apples, pumpkins, and more.

ANIMALS

A day trip to **Como Park Zoo & Conservatory** or the **Minnesota Zoo** can bring great joy to animal lovers and watching animals can be a meditative experience. The Minnesota Zoo partners with the Minnesota Bison Conservation Herd and you can see these magnificent animals at five locations around the state. The Bison Prairie at the **Spring Lake Park Reserve** in Hastings is home to a small herd. Viewing platforms provide better views of their bison herd at **Oxbow Park and Zollman Zoo**. Say hi to the other animals, many of whom have

injuries preventing them from being released back into their natural habitats. Is it buffalo or bison? Biologists prefer the term bison, which is used interchangeably with buffalo in North America. At **Hemker Park and Zoo**, visitors can enjoy tram tours and the opportunity to feed animals, including otters, budgies, a giraffe, and Tio the Rhino, the only rhinoceros in Minnesota.

EXPECTATIONS

Planning a day trip requires doing your due diligence by checking websites and maps for directions, hours, and potential stops. Having a backup plan in case of unexpected changes such as weather, flooding, road closures, or a change in mood can also be helpful. While it's frustrating when things don't go as planned, it's important to remain flexible and adapt to new circumstances. Rather than feeling resentful, approach these situations with a sense of hope and gratitude. Unexpected detours can often lead to new experiences and adventures, so keep an open mind and embrace the journey. Remember, flexibility is key to making the most of your day trip and discovering hidden gems along the way.

Jen Shepherd, MSW, LICSW, CCA is a clinical aromatherapist and clinical social worker. She works as an aromatherapy educator, consultant, and wellness coach. She's also co-publisher and community relations director for The Phoenix Spirit. Connect at www.shepherdwellnessmn.com.

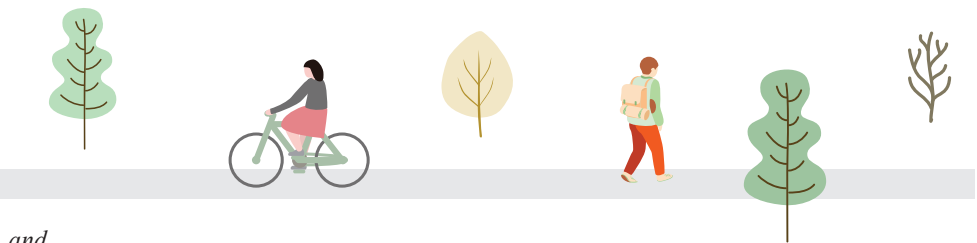
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Retreat Directory

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

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

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

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 who seek to create work in residence in a natural setting with arts facilities and comfortable cabins.

FAMILIES COPING WITH AN ILL CHILD OR LOSS

Faith's Lodge
Danbury, WI
612-825-2073
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

In January 2020, the Audubon Center of the North Woods formally changed its name to Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center. A private, nonprofit 501(c)(3) residential environmental learning and conference & retreat center in east central MN, providing environmental and outdoor education programs since 1971.

Boundary Waters Canoe Area
Northern MN
218-626-4300
www.fs.usda.gov

The BWCA is a 1,098,000-acre wilderness area within the Superior National Forest.

SPIRITUAL / RECOVERY

ARC Retreat Community
Stanchfield, MN
763-689-3540
www.arcretreat.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

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

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

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

Demontreville Jesuit Retreat House welcomes men of all Christian faiths and denominations. Attendance is required from Thursday supper until Sunday at 7:30 pm. If a person cannot be present for the entire weekend, we ask that you come on a different weekend when you can be present for the entire retreat.

Jesuit Retreat House on Lake Winnebago
Oshkosh, WI
920-231-9060
www.jesuitretreathouse.org

The Jesuit Retreat House (JRH) is located 6 miles south of Oshkosh on 20 beautiful acres along Lake Winnebago. JRH offers six 12-Step Recovery Weekend Retreats for women and men starting Thursday evening with dinner and ending Sunday after Mass and lunch. Weekend conferences based on 12-Steps offered each day. Mass, private reflection, devotions, spiritual direction, private reconciliation, a healing service, and a 12-Step meeting is also offered.

Lakeplace Retreat Center
Bovey, MN
218-245-1395
www.lakeplacecenter.com

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Minnesota Humanities Center
St. Paul, MN
651-774-0105
www.mnhum.org

Surrounded by parkland yet minutes from the downtown St. Paul, you'll feel like you've escaped the city. With private overnight lodging, flexible meeting spaces, and onsite catering staff preparing every meal, consider the center for your next retreat. Give your event the attention it deserves at the Minnesota Humanities Event Center.



Consider SHALOM for your gatherings or private retreats

Visit our website for more information
www.shalomretreats.org

Shalom Spirituality Center has various options available if you are looking for a quiet space or considering taking time away for a private overnight retreat. From a large apartment with a fully-furnished kitchen to more simple accommodations with a private bedroom and a small dining area. Groups will enjoy our peaceful gathering spaces; we offer 55 guest bedrooms and rooms that can accommodate groups of 1-100 participants.



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ARC

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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.

DAY TRIPS**Forestville/Mystery Cave State Park**

Preston, MN
507-352-5111
www.dnr.state.mn.us

Visit Forestville/Mystery Cave State Park to see natural wonders above and below ground. Explore the world of Mystery Cave with its stalactites, stalagmites, and underground pools. Also, take in the history of a lost Minnesota city.

The Lavender Barnyard

Farmington, MN
651-226-6166
www.lavenderbarnyard.com

The only lavender farm in the state that is fully dedicated to growing lavender. Between May and October, you can schedule a farm tour or even a photo session if you're a photographer.

Oxbow Park and Zollman Zoo

Byron, MN
507-328-7340
www.olmstedcounty.gov

The Dr. Paul E. Zollman Zoo houses over 30 species of wild animals native to Minnesota. Many of the zoo creatures have physical injuries that have rendered them non-releasable, while others are surplus zoo animals from other facilities.

DAY TRIPS**White Pine Berry Farm**

River Falls, WI
715-222-2946
whitepineberryfarm.com

White Pine Berry Farm started in April 2012. Since then, the farm has grown strawberries, raspberries (red, black and gold), and blueberries. Other fruits and vegetables such as currants, rhubarb, asparagus, and some fruit trees have been added. They continue to try new varieties of strawberries, blueberry and raspberries. The farm concentrates on being a U-pick fruit farm, but have jams and jellies and prepicked berries if there is excess fruit beyond U-pick demand. After 40 years in the dairy farm business, the owners decided to begin a new chapter in life and White Pine Berry Farm was born.

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Rochelle Gredvig PsyD

Dr. Gredvig works as a therapist and clinical diagnostician at Nystrom and Associates in Maple Grove. She specializes in trauma and dissociative disorders. She is trained in Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing. She also completes psychological testing on adults for ADHD and diagnostic clarification. Gredvig has been in recovery from addiction since 1984.

Q What is your current role at Nystrom & Associates? What inspired you to do the work that you're doing?

I'm a clinical diagnostician and psychotherapist, which means that I do psychological testing as well as therapy. I've always enjoyed helping others. I went through substance use disorder (SUD) treatment when I was 16 years old and thought that I wanted to be a SUD counselor, until I took my first psychology class during my senior year of high school. I've been practicing on and off (between raising children) for 20 years and have always been passionate about helping patients heal from trauma using Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR). In recent years, I've developed another passion, helping patients with dissociative disorders.

Q Please describe the history of dissociative disorders and how they became a part of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual.

TREATING DISSOCIATIVE DISORDERS

Ask the Expert

In an article by Dell and O'Neil, they state that "the current dissociative disorders that have been described were discovered prior to 1900 but decades passed with little study or research of this spectrum of psychiatric pathology. The existence of dissociative disorders is questioned by many in the field of psychiatry, and the diagnosis is not utilized by some clinicians. Complicating factors include misdiagnosis and under-diagnosis, which may occur due to unfamiliarity with this spectrum of disorders, disbelief that they exist, or lack of knowledge and appreciation of the epidemiology."

When I completed my doctorate in 2000, dissociative disorders were barely discussed, and we were led to believe that they were exceedingly rare. I've spoken to many colleagues who have graduated in recent years, and they were taught similarly. When I began hearing clinicians describe their dissociative clients in training several years ago, I was flabbergasted. I thought they were exaggerating when they said that they had several or more patients with florid dissociative symptoms. Once I began looking for dissociative symptoms in my own patients with trauma and/or neglect-filled childhoods, I began to discover how common dissociative disorders are among patients with Complex Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (CPTSD). I have a few patients whom I had seen for a few years without having any idea that they had dissociative symptoms. Once I became knowledgeable and began asking the right questions, they were as surprised as I to realize they had other parts of self. More often than not, persons with dissociative disorders have no idea that they have them because parts of self are meant to be hidden.

Q What are some symptoms of dissociative disorders?

In an article written by Kluft in 1999, he lists the following as possible symptoms of dissociative disorders:

1. Prior treatment failure
2. Three or more prior diagnoses
3. Concurrent psychiatric and somatic symptoms
4. Fluctuating symptoms and levels of function
5. Severe headaches and other pain syndromes
6. Time distortion, time lapses, or frank amnesia
7. Being told of disremembered behaviors
8. Others noting observable changes
9. The discovery of objects, productions or handwriting in one's possession that one cannot account for or recognize
10. Hearing voices (80% or more experienced as within the head) that are experienced as separate, often urging the patient toward some activity.
11. The patients use of "we" or third person.
12. History of child abuse
13. An inability to recall childhood events from the years 6 to 11.

It is common for dissociative patients to experience physical sensations or pain when parts of self are activated. One of my dissociative patients has struggled with frequent migraines for years, but once they started doing "parts work," their migraines became few and far between. Another patient struggled with debilitating Meniere's attacks to the point where they couldn't walk without holding onto walls in their home. She only experiences slight waves of dizziness now and has discovered that those symptoms were the result of parts controlling her behavior because the parts thought she was doing too much for others and needed more self-care.

Q What differentiates normal dissociation from symptoms of a dissociative disorder?

Everyone has numerous ego states that are our way of being in certain situations, like modes of functioning. Ego states retain a shared sense of belonging to the person as a whole and a person is able to move from role to role while retaining a

sense of "me." Dissociative parts are similar to ego states, except they are distinct and separate from one's sense of self. Each dissociative part has its own sense of self and is able to think, feel, and act more or less independently of the others. They are part of a whole person whose personality is fragmented and compartmentalized.


Dissociative disorders fall on a spectrum with typical dissociation that affects everyone on one end and Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID), previously known as Multiple Personality Disorder, on the opposite end.

Q What are the etiology and risk factors for dissociative disorders?


Repeated abuse, neglect and/or lack of attachment to primary caregivers before the age of 12, while the brain is still developing, can result in a child's brain developing new neural networks that separate into separate parts of self. For example, the child is then able to get up and go to school with no memory of the abuse from the night before, as the part that holds the trauma slips into the background of the child's consciousness.

It's normal for children to develop imaginary friends between the ages of 2 to 6. These fantasy friends help children cope with loneliness and painful emotions. As a child's concept of self develops and they become better able to regulate their emotions, these inner companions dissolve and are integrated into self. However, in the presence of severe, chronic and inescapable trauma, instead of outgrowing these companions, the child may come to rely more heavily upon them. Often patients with dissociative disorders recall imaginary friends vividly and/or still actively engage with them.

When a child lives in a stressful world of abuse, trauma, neglect and/or lack of attachment, they learn that it's necessary to keep secrets from the self and from the world to survive. As Sandra Paulsen states in her book, *Looking Through the Eyes of Trauma*, "[These children] create a



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false self that serves to present a happy face to the world. Hidden behind a veil of amnesia are the other parts of self that hold traumatic experiences. The strategy of containing unacceptable material behind an amnesia curtain creates a grand illusion that abuse is happening to someone else.”

Q Are dissociative disorders common in people who struggle with substance use disorders and/or mental illness?

They can be, depending on their childhoods. As addiction and mental illness run in families, children being raised by parents who are addicts and/or struggle with mental illnesses, are less likely to get their needs met. The trauma and abuse can be subtle. For example, if a child is raised solely by a severely depressed mother, who is unable to engage with, nurture or empathize with the child, the child can develop a dissociative disorder. Or if the parents occasionally binge drink and exhibit erratic, frightening behavior at such times, the child can develop a dissociative disorder.

Q As a psychologist, what are some formal assessments that you give to assess for a dissociative disorder?

Tests like the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) and Milon aren’t reliable for assessing dissociative disorders as they attribute dissociative symptoms to psychotic behavior. The most thorough and well-researched assessment instrument is the Multidimensional Inventory of Dissociation (MID). It also screens for bipolar disorder and malingering. I often read the questions from the Dissociative Experiences Scale with therapy patients as a quick screen and information-gathering tool. The scores aren’t as reliable or accurate as the MID.

Q If someone struggles with dissociation, what are some things that they can do to practice self-regulation?


The biggest struggle for patients with dissociative disorders is when current events, sounds or smells, trigger traumas and activate parts of self. On such occasions,

it helps to orient themselves to the present: talk to their parts and let them know the year, that they are in an adult body; that no one is harming them; that they have a car and can leave a situation if they are uncomfortable, etc. It’s very important for dissociative patients to have compassion for their parts of self, focusing on gratitude that they have held the trauma for the system and the fact that most parts are young and scared.

Q What are some resources for people looking for help?

My favorite book for both clinicians and patients is Healing the Fragmented Selves of Trauma Survivors by Janina Fisher. I’ve had several patients realize they have a dissociative disorder just from listening to the audiobook version of the introduction. The Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing International Association (EMDR) sponsors excellent training that incorporates using EMDR for dissociative disorders. I’ve attended some of these led by various clinicians such as Sandra Paulson, Kathy Steele, and Joanne Twombly. If someone is looking for a therapist that is skilled in this area, they can go to the MN Trauma Project’s website to view the therapist directory.


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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Stillwater, MN	1825 Curve Crest Blvd #103	651-351-9325
St Paul, MN	1821 University Ave West #385	612-326-7602
Elk River, MN	19230 Evans St NW #203	612-454-2011
Litchfield, MN	114 North Holcombe	320-693-2461
Olivia, MN	104 So. 4 th Street	320-400-0001
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Driggs from page 1

we know what we are doing in making the choices they want us to make. It's all about how we men aren't smart enough to know what we are doing, which is often the case. Men over rate their abilities to pick wisely in partnering, partly because males in general are socialized to have an exaggerated idea of themselves and what they are capable of. The reality is that we men can learn to make wise choices in relationships but we need extra mentoring to carry that out. Ideally we would get that mentoring from our own dads who are strongly committed to their own partners. Too often dads are just as amiss as their sons and misguidedly leave their sons to sow their own wild oats.

Clearly how males are raised to be men is what causes us men to make bad choices in relationships. Often we are doing the best we can on how to mate. We are not aware of our own unconscious training to pick a partner and we just roll the dice in how we decide. Men choose a partner for a variety of reasons: to have fulfilling sex, to raise a family, to be emotionally close in a committed relationship or for ulterior and often unconscious reasons (wanting a trophy wife, getting ahead in business, hoping to be taken care of by a partner, needing a nanny for the kids, or picking a spouse to please a parent and have social standing). Most of the time we men don't know why we are wanting to marry and misguidedly think that being in love is just enough of a reason. Surely we men need to learn that feeling love for another person is not the same as actually being behaviorally committed to another person's happiness and

our own well-being. It's the difference between romance and the real stuff.

In summary, men make bad relationship decisions because of poor relationship training that unconsciously misleads them, because they lack the emotional maturity to be in a long-term committed relationship and because of how reckless impulsiveness is trained into men's lives. Men are incredibly more successful in their work lives, physical prowess, risk-taking and financial success then they are in their emotional intelligence and love life.

Alas all is not lost. There is a saving grace to such short-comings. Men are fully capable of being smart and forgiving when it comes to their own troubles and know how to fix what is broken. Margaret Meade, a famous anthropologist said this best. After her international cross-cultural studies of what makes relationships work she was asked provocatively why she had been married three times. She said the first marriage was for sex, the second marriage was for child-rearing and the third was for emotional intimacy. While I don't recommend this approach to relationships certainly many of us learn how to be in a loving long-term relationship through a trial and error approach to love. Many of us learn to love wisely if we can see our mistakes and learn from them.

PRACTICAL TIPS ON CHOOSING A LIFE MATE

Consider the following guidelines in seeking a life partner:

1. Work on yourself before looking for

Don't look for someone to complete you. Be a whole person who has their own identity before you blend your life with another. Learn how to complete yourself first.

long-term love. Don't look for someone to complete you. Be a whole person who has their own identity before you blend your life with another. Learn how to complete yourself first. Make some good emotionally close friends with other men and some kind women before you seek love in your own life. Learn how to first care of yourself: do your own laundry, housekeeping and cooking. Maintain your physical health with regular exercise and current health check-ups. Develop personal hobbies and interests. Clearly keep and maintain gainful employment and have some goals in life. Develop a warm sense of humor and show abundant compassion for others. Doing regular volunteer work can assist you in this area. Overall be the type of person that women (men) would like to fall in love

with. Be aware that the single best attractor of women is your having good character. Just having money, good looks and a great car only go so far. Be the bigger person that others would want to love. Working on yourself as you seek love will not only attract possible life partners but it will make you more confident in yourself and less desperate in relationships

2. Open yourself up to uncharted waters. You will have to go outside your comfort zone if you wish to find a special person in your life. So take some big but relatively safe risks—expose yourself to challenging social situations outside your usual haunts, allow yourself to feel self-conscious (It won't kill you!) and learn to enjoy your courage. Attend a church supper, do some community volunteer work, and join



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- New Beginnings - Waverly, MN
- New Beginnings IOP - 8 Locations
- Oakridge - Rochester, MN
- Tapestry - St. Paul, MN
- Twin Town - St. Paul, MN

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a singles group. Tell your friends you want to meet a life partner and ask them to introduce you to someone they feel may be a good match for you. Obviously you can always try on-line dating (as long as you're willing to be wise and turn away people who are not good matches for you). Perhaps none of these ideas will help you find a life mate. But at least you will have a lot of fun in looking and socializing and you may inadvertently hit the jackpot! Remember what John Lennon said about love and life. He said "Life Happens when we are making other plans."

3. Be careful of repetition compulsions and initial infatuation. Sigmund Freud once said that we are unconsciously and repeatedly drawn to choose partners who are not good for us in a misguided effort to correct childhood conflicts. The familiarity of choosing old dysfunctional patterns can be exhilarating for us as we hope to have a different outcome this time than we did in our earlier relationships. In relationships we are like moths drawn to a flame. We just can't help picking the wrong partner! Most of our initial infatuation is about finally finding the right person only to find out later that we are mistaken. It's best to be skeptical of our initial infatuation and wait and see over the long term (one year) if the person we are courting really is making a positive difference in our life as we do so in their life. Patient, sober-minded and realistic courtship over at least a period of time (one year) where we show our true selves to another person and vice-versa is the best love strategy. It makes no sense to get excited until we know the circus really is coming to town! This is where you use your head more than your heart.
4. Make sure you can have positive conflict with a partner where difficulties can be addressed and settled fairly quickly. How you handle disagreements is the best predictor of relationship satisfaction and longevity. Learn how to fight fair where both of you have valid points of view. You can read about this in *Why Marriages Succeed or Fail...and How You Can Make Yours Last* by John Gottman, Ph.D. (Fireside Books, 1994). If you avoid conflict, are controlling, play the blame game, often lose your temper, hold grudges, avoid taking responsibility for your part in disagreements and over blame yourself for relational strife you may not be ready for a long-term relation-

ship. It would be wisest to first work on yourself to learn assertiveness from a helper before launching into a long-term love relationship. It is possible to learn constructive conflict.

5. Always pay attention to the "Uh-Oh" Button. That's when your prospective partner says or does something that alarms you. Don't talk yourself out of your reaction, don't lose your cool over it, and do calmly explore what your partner is doing by what he or she is saying or doing. Pay attention to your inklings with a partner as a hidden part of your lover may be revealed in this way. Trust your gut! You may have misunderstood or misinterpreted what was said but at least calmly explore what your partner is trying to tell you. At least then you know what you are getting into. Forewarned is forearmed. Sometimes people tell you their deepest secrets without noticing they are. If you are with a loving person he or she will not chastise you for your caution. None of us is perfect but some imperfections may be too much for us to handle. Perhaps you may decide to tolerate a serious relationship difficulty out of a greater love for you partner. In general it's best to know what you are getting into from the outset.
6. Make sure that the person you intend to mate with for life does actually love you as a person. Realize that any of us can be loved superficially, based on how much money we have, how sexy we look, what our social standing is, how much we can assist a partner in his or her career, what kind of family we come from, how cute our kids are, etc. These are all not good reasons to marry someone since the benefits are short-lived and not very deep. You don't want to be a love object to another person, a way to be used but not deeply loved. Clearly none of these reasons should decide why you love someone either. Most of us need to be loved for who we are, not for what we offer another person. Men are particularly dense when it comes to knowing if they are truly loved. Ask yourself if your lover would take care of you if you were sick, support you briefly if you were without a job, didn't have much money, could accept you as you age and would choose you if another handsome man came by. You want to know that you are irreplaceable with your life partner and that you being loved for who you are not what you do. Obviously you want to offer the same to your partner as well.

If you're unsure of why you are chosen by your partner it's best to take the time to find out. Don't just take a mate because she is a sweet young thing. Go for the real stuff. And be the real thing for a life mate.

WHAT IF YOU'VE ALREADY PICKED A LESS DESIRABLE PARTNER?

Perhaps you're already into a long term relationship with a partner and after reading this article you say to yourself, "Uh-Oh. Maybe I made a mistake in who I chose as a life mate." This realization is especially bad if you have children together. Don't despair right off the bat. Most marriages have times where we question ourselves and ask if we've made the wrong choice. Most of the time our lovers once again show us a good side to themselves and we forget our doubts and realize we too can be a piece of work to live with. Most of the time we have trouble with our mates and the trouble goes away. If the trouble recurs and gets worse then there may be real problems in your marriage. Even then don't despair and don't blame yourself. Most marital problems are not either person's fault and they can be repaired and treated with a reputable and competent marital counselor. All marriage counseling does not have to lead to divorce and mayhem. In my experience most of the couples who see me can actually enjoy the experience, do learn about the hidden factors that are diminishing their love for one another and eventually have a warmer and surprisingly stronger loving and more skilled connection to each other. They often say, "Gee I wish we had done this years ago."

To find such services I can recommend the Hamm Clinic in St. Paul (Phone: 651-224-0614) which has highly trained and well-supervised couple services based on a sliding fee. It is a real gift to all of us when a couple starts out at the doors of hell and then arrives at the gates of heaven in a connection the never realized they could have. Nothing is more sacred than the love between a man and his life partner.

John H. Driggs, LICSW, is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in private practice in St. Paul and co-author of Intimacy Between Men. Photo by Mahjur Ahmed / Unsplash

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RECOVERY SPOTLIGHT

Wendy Jones Leaves a Legacy at Minnesota Recovery Connection

by Pat Samples



Jones at the State Capitol during Walk for Recovery (Photo courtesy of Wendy Jones)

Minnesota Recovery Connection (MRC), a community-based organization, provides peer-to-peer support, public education, and advocacy for people seeking or sustaining recovery from substance use disorders. In this interview (edited for length), Wendy Jones, MRC's executive director since 2018, shares highlights from her experience as she leaves her position.

WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO MRC IN THE FIRST PLACE?

The community-based approach and the advocacy around recovery — all pathways to recovery — and the openness about breaking stigma. I'd never really thought of myself as being part of a community like the recovery community. I never did a Twelve Step program. I went through treatment, but it was a very solitary experience. It was always something that I kind of hid because of the stigma around it.

Volunteering with Minnesota Recovery Connection before I became the executive director opened my eyes to the connection from recovery to basically everything else — the intersections with public policy, with our healthcare system, with our educational system. It inspired in me that drive, that mission, to really make a difference in a space that had been hidden to me for a long time.

WHAT WERE YOU HOPING TO ACCOMPLISH IN THIS JOB?

So much great work had happened prior to me joining Minnesota Recovery Connection, but it had been through a fair amount of turmoil in the previous years. It needed its base to be solidified, so that was my first goal.

I was entering the recovery field after 30 years of working in public history and museums and had to develop a deeper knowledge, a deeper understanding of the nuances in this field within the broader space of behavioral health. So, that was also my goal, for me to learn.

Other recovery community organizations were starting to pop up around the state after the introduction of Medicaid reimbursement for peer recovery sup-

port services, which is a service that our RCOs [Recovery Community Organizations] provide, among many other things. There were a lot of things happening in the political landscape, the national landscape, that could either sort of pit us against each other in going after resources or could promote that we start learning from each other and collaborate. My goal was to make connections to support the growth of this recovery movement around the state.

HOW HAS MINNESOTA RECOVERY CONNECTION GROWN UNDER YOUR LEADERSHIP?

When I started, there were four staff members. There are now over 20, and a lot of new partnerships have developed. We used to do maybe three trainings a year. We now do over 20. We have not only helped to develop the recovery peer recovery specialist workforce, but in being able to deliver services, have grown tremendously in these past four years. We've had a tremendous team of people here, all of whom have started as volunteers. So, that kind of recovery leadership development has happened, and I'm grateful to work with such an amazing team and I'm so proud of them.

One thing I'm very proud of is that we've built up a hub of support services and training that's targeted at people who have experienced incarceration. There's such a strong intersection between substance use disorder and incarceration, and we've really been successful in elevating that as a need and building programs and services that are not just delivered by Minnesota Recovery Connection but are coordinating with other organizations to support that.

I'm very proud that we have worked with other recovery community organizations around the state to create an alliance called the Minnesota Alliance of Recovery Community Organizations, or MARCO, that will provide professional development, support, and advocacy for organizations like MRC around the state to help grow more community-based recovery hubs and to help sustain them in their work. A lot of RCOs worked to-

gether, recognizing that we needed to lift each other up, to develop MARCO. We received a grant from the Minnesota Department of Human Services through a competitive RFP process to establish MARCO as a statewide RCO. Our grant contract was just executed a few weeks ago, and I'm very excited to see how MARCO will develop.

DOES THE EMERGENCE OF MARCO CHANGE MINNESOTA RECOVERY CONNECTION'S ROLE?

Prior to MARCO's development MRC was kind of filling that gap of being a statewide support. It was the state's first RCO, and one of only a few RCOs for a long time. We've helped to mentor other new organizations around the state and have been a strong advocate for recovery in public policy. I think we all felt it was better in the long run that eventually there be a new organization to take on that role.

Minnesota Recovery Connection will continue after I leave to focus on its direct service delivery, providing peer support, and on its public education efforts, doing training, and the Walk for Recovery. RCO mentorship. Statewide advocacy and working with the legislature on behalf of our RCOs will move over to this new organization.

WHAT PROGRAMS HAS MRC DEVELOPED RELATED TO PEOPLE BEING INCARCERATED?

Recovery Coaching, Navigating the Criminal Justice System, is a four-day training intended for people who've already completed a recovery coaching training. It deepens their ability to use their own lived experience of having been involved in the criminal justice system in

being able to help others who have had that experience. Because the criminal justice system is very complex, people who have experienced that often have some very unique needs and face different barriers than others. So, we developed that training as a way to help strengthen the workforce, and to help strengthen recovery community organizations overall.

We also worked with the Minnesota Certification Board to make sure that someone who goes through that training, or a comparable training, could get an additional credential as a certified Peer Recovery Specialist. We've been working with recovery community organizations around the state to get that training up and running.

We've developed really strong partnerships with Hennepin County Probation, Dakota County jails, the Department of Corrections, and others to connect with individuals early, either while they're currently incarcerated or as they're reentering their communities, to provide that peer-to-peer support.

Just recently, we started working with the Minnesota Department of Health and the Department of Corrections to develop a coordinated network of reentry recovery support. Minnesota Recovery Connection is going to be the lead, working with seven other recovery community organizations around the state so that

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If there's one thing that I hope for the future, it's that as a community we stay focused on the bigger picture, of lifting each other up. Recovery needs to be a big tent with room for all.

we can have a coordinated referral system when someone leaves incarceration. We're working with other organizations in Moorhead, St. Cloud, Duluth, Mankato, Rochester, Bemidji, and then a culturally specific organization, the Twin Cities Recovery Project, which primarily serves members of the African American community.

A couple years ago, we trained individuals who were currently incarcerated at the Moose Lake Penitentiary to be recovery coaches, and we will be doing more soon. The big vision behind this is to start building someone's capacity to use that lived experience to help others and maybe create a pathway to employment when they return to their communities.

WHAT CAN YOU SAY ABOUT THE IMPACT MRC IS HAVING?

The impact is pretty profound in two ways. One, in affecting the lives of individuals who are not getting the support they need in traditional places. At MRC, maybe they're signed up to get telephone recovery support on a weekly basis, or they're meeting with a coach one to one on a regular basis. Often that individual then starts to volunteer at MRC. They become part of a community that's very supportive of recovery. As they volunteer, they're engaging in other activities that help to build their recovery and their skills in helping others.

Many of them will then go on to take our recovery coaching class, which is a week-long training, and then get their credential from the Minnesota Certification Board. Many do terms with Recovery Corps, an AmeriCorps program that we partner with. Or they might get employed by other organizations as peer recovery specialists. Or they take that knowledge and skills and experience — their recovery capital — and are able to use that in other aspects of their lives. It's about helping people sustain recovery over time, building social connections, employment connections, health connections — strengthening their own recovery capital and their capacity to give back and to help others.

On a systems level, the change that I see is breaking stigma, like with the Walk for Recovery, an amazing event to break stigma around substance use disorder. We're basically recovering out loud and not afraid to talk about it, and we're modeling stigma-free language. We're modeling hope.

On broader systems change level, I'm particularly grateful that we've been able

to use Minnesota Recovery Connection as a way to support other communities and other entities. We've worked quite a bit with Niyyah Recovery Initiative, founded by Farhia Budul, which serves the East African Community. We're also a fiscal sponsor for Recovery Cafe Frogtown in Saint Paul. We wrote emerging recovery community organizations in Duluth and Saint Cloud into grants that have helped them. We've worked with an indigenous recovery movement called Sober Squad. Over 200 people from different Native nations in Minnesota have been trained to be recovery coaches through MRC.

We've partnered with Allina, North Memorial, Hennepin County Child Protective Services, and Central Minnesota Emergency Medical Services. We're partnering with systems to extend peer-based recovery support out into a more public level. We're helping to build a recovery ecosystem.

ARE THERE ANY PARTICULAR EXPERIENCES YOU'VE HAD AT MRC THAT STAND OUT FOR YOU?

I think I'm most proud of those individuals, organizations, and groups that have embraced their own strength, their own agency and recovery capital. Because this work is not about doing for people. It's about walking alongside. When we all walk alongside each other and support each other, we're powerful. We're lifting each other up. That is what inspires me and has made me want to do this work.

WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR HOPES FOR THE FUTURE OF RECOVERY IN MINNESOTA?

I really hope to see more recovery voices at the table in public policy making, and things being constructed and developed with diverse communities of recovery instead of for them. There have been some positive developments in the state recently. Governor Walz established the Governor's Advisory Council on Opioids, Substance Use, and Addiction — a community-based council that I am proud to be a member of. He also developed a subcommittee around substance use disorder and addiction and appointed a Director of Addiction and Recovery, Jeremy Drucker.

My hope is that this energy can continue in a way that shifts the narrative to a long-term recovery vision, not just short-term intervention and treatment. We need both. Also important is recognizing substance use disorder as a health condition and not a moral failing. We need to keep working towards a recovery-oriented system of care.

CAN YOU SHARE WHAT YOU'RE GOING TO BE DOING NEXT?

I hope to continue working to grow the recovery movement around the state.

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU'D LIKE TO ADD?

If there's one thing that I hope for the future, it's that as a community we stay focused on the bigger picture, of lifting each other up. Recovery needs to be a big tent with room for all.

Pat Samples is a Twin Cities freelance writer, writing coach, and somatic coach. Her website is patsamples.com.



FROM THE STATE OF MINNESOTA

Medical Assistance, MinnesotaCare Enrollees: Be Prepared to Keep Your Coverage as Program Eligibility Checks Restart

by Kristine Preston & Dr. Nathan Chomilo

Recovery from substance use disorder requires a person to be able to focus on healing their whole self — mind, body and spirit. Having health care coverage is a critical resource that provides the help that you need to focus on your healing, without worrying about how you're going to pay for it.

But for many Minnesotans, health care coverage could be expiring in the coming months due to the federal government's end of COVID-19-related protections for public health care programs.

Like all states, during the COVID-19 pandemic Minnesota has maintained health care coverage for Minnesotans with low incomes and others enrolled in Medicaid. Before the pandemic, people enrolled in Medical Assistance (Minnesota's Medicaid program) and MinnesotaCare would usually have their eligibility reviewed once a year to see whether they remain eligible. This process is called renewal. Renewals stopped during the pandemic to help Minnesotans access health care, and to keep people insured, as well as securing billions of federal dollars to help the state cover health care costs.

However, a federal law passed late last year requires state, county and Tribal workers to return to pre-pandemic procedures. This means that they must review the eligibility of more than 1.5 million Minnesotans who are currently on Medical Assistance and MinnesotaCare by May 2024.

Now that Minnesota is required to restart renewals, it will be important for people enrolled in these health care programs to watch their mail closely. Minnesota does not yet have the ability to send renewal forms to enrollees digitally. Therefore people on Medical Assistance and MinnesotaCare should make sure to be on the lookout for renewal information in their mailbox and understand the importance of sending the paperwork back as soon as possible with any necessary documents. Enrollees who have moved in the last three years should update their contact information right away, especially their address, to ensure they get this important paperwork in the mail. You can find out how to update your contact information, look up when to expect your renewal, sign up to receive text messages and learn more at mn.gov/dhs/renewmycoverage.

It's important to note that people can access substance use disorder treatment even if they don't have health care coverage, as Minnesota pays for treatment for people meeting financial eligibility requirements. In fact, more than two-thirds of substance use disorder treatment services in Minnesota are publicly funded,

whether through Medical Assistance or the state's Behavioral Health Fund. Eligibility for the Behavioral Health Fund is largely based on Medical Assistance income requirements, however, so if you are already enrolled in Medical Assistance or MinnesotaCare, it will enable you to get help even faster.

While health care coverage is important for people who are early in their recovery journey, it is just as important for individuals who are established in their recovery. Medical Assistance and MinnesotaCare cover costs for services like recovery peer support, medications like buprenorphine for Opioid Use Disorder and various outpatient services. But health care coverage also helps people in recovery in ways that are not as obvious. It helps people get preventive health care or see a doctor to find the right mix of mental health medications, or see a physical therapist to help with chronic pain. All of these things improve a person's overall health and reduce the need for a person to self-medicate. For someone in recovery, that can make all the difference.

The Minnesota Department of Human Services is committed to ensuring that eligible Minnesotans retain their public coverage when annual renewal processes resume, and to helping Minnesotans who are no longer eligible for Medical Assistance or MinnesotaCare connect with other coverage options if needed. We look forward to partnering with the recovery community to keep our friends, neighbors and family covered and taking steps forward on their sobriety journey.

Kristine Preston is the deputy assistant commissioner of the Behavioral Health Division at the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS). Dr. Nathan Chomilo, MD, FAAP, FACP, is the Medicaid and MinnesotaCare medical director at the Minnesota Department of Human Services, and he practices as a general pediatrician in Brooklyn Center with Park Nicollet.

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Awaiting Awe

by Mary Lou Logsdon



"He who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead; his eyes are closed." — ALBERT EINSTEIN

I know it's retreat time when I skitter from one activity to the next, squeezing one more thing in the five minutes between my last activity and the next. My life moves at the pace of a rushing river rather than meandering stream. Yup, time to go offline for a while.

I am reading the book *Awe: The New Science of Everyday Wonder and How it Can Transform Your Life* by Dacher Keltner. Here is a topic to ponder in the open space of retreat time.

Awe is our response when we catch a glimpse of the spirit in the ordinary of life. Keltner defines awe as "the feeling of being in the presence of something vast that transcends your current understanding of the world." We know this feeling. It comes when a rain shower gives way to a multi-hued rainbow that traverses the sky. Or when the zoo's brand new baby giraffe stands on his wobbly legs to nuzzle his mother. Or stars brighten a moonless night far from city lights. Or we hold a newborn infant, amazed at this creature so perfectly formed. Awe takes our breath away.

Those of us who grew up in the Judeo-Christian tradition probably heard the phrase "fear of the Lord." That fear is much closer to awe than to our fear when startled or scared or filled with dread. The "fear" here is akin to reverence or awe—to be present to something so big and mighty that it makes us aware of our own insignificance.

Keltner and his research team studied stories of awe from people around the world with various cultural and religious backgrounds. He clustered the stories into eight groupings.

The most often described category was *other people's courage, kindness, strength, or overcoming*. Such experiences bring tears to our eyes. I think of the movie CODA where a young woman leaves her deaf family for a life that recognizes her musical gifts while her family moves toward finding a way to thrive without her as a bridge to the hearing world. Or the story of a teenager who jumps into a swimming pool to save a drowning child. Or the 9/11 story of the people on flight 93 headed toward D.C. who attempted to take over the plane controls, crashing to the ground in Stonybrook Township, PA, to save hundreds of lives while ending their own.

I am touched by the bravery of ordinary people. A group of fellow church members are sponsoring several Ukrainian families as they seek a new life far from their war-torn country. I am inspired as I see these intrepid immigrants come to a new land where they know no one, struggle with the language, and face bureaucratic obstacles at every turn. This is heroic, courageous, and awe-inspiring.

The second most frequent description of awe is *collective effervescence*. We experience this at weddings, graduations, family reunions, political rallies, or sporting events. We gather to share the sense of joy that comes with a celebration as a loved one moves into a new life stage or when our team wins the world series, or a dear friend celebrates 25 years of sobriety. We are all in this together.

Third is *nature*. This one is dear to me. Nature provides so many opportunities to stand in wonder. Mary Oliver, in her poem "The Messenger", says, "Let me keep my mind on what matters, which is my work, which is mostly standing still and learning to be astonished." Each new season brings its own astonishments—139 inches of snow in Duluth, wildflowers poking through ashes on land devastated by wild fires, trees growing out of mountain rock. The natural world provides perspective when life seems overwhelming and out of balance.

Fourth is *music*. Music brings awe whether in the fulsomeness of a Beethoven symphony, the choral performance of a High School choir, the familiar spirituals we sing as we gather round a campfire, the song that brings a shivery memory, or a single bugle playing Taps on Memorial Day. Music speaks across language, ethnicity, and tradition.

Fifth is *visual design*. Visual design is awe generating in both its complexity and simplicity. I recently attended an event at the St Paul Cathedral, enwrapped in the beauty of the stained glass, the oversized statuary, the gold filigree outlining domes and arches. While that elaborate beauty resonates, so does simplicity as exemplified in the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Washington D.C. Its straight lines draw me to the simple litany of names and the stark loss of so many lives.

Next are stories of *spiritual and religious awe*. Many of us have had mystical encounters though we may not name them as such. Perhaps it was at a religious ceremony or in the quiet of a retreat or alone in prayer. We know that we have been led, have encountered the holy, and are touched by love. This happens for me in synchronicity—something that appears to be a coincidence leads me to where I need to be. I know that I am being guided.

Seventh is *life and death*. Being present for new life is breath-taking, the amazement of it all. As an adoptive parent, I know that this wonder of new life is also sparked when an eight-month-old comes into your open arms for the first time. Similarly, being present as someone takes their last breath is a privilege and a blessing. Time stands still. We are immersed in both the present and the eternal.

The final category of wonder or awe is *epiphanies*. Keltner describes epiphanies as when "we suddenly understand essential truths about life." They may come by way of insights, scientific discoveries, mathematical equations or sudden disclosures. I was thrilled to learn that scientists had found a vaccine for COVID-19 so quickly because they had been working on mRNA vaccines for decades, ready to respond to this new virus, as though according to a plan.

Awe adds zest to our lives. It draws us together. It reminds us that the world is alive, connected, and we are part of something much bigger than us. Awe leads to gratitude, joy, and belonging. May your life be blessed with awe and wonder!

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