

## Ask the Expert

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## Retreat Directory

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

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# The Phoenix Spirit

May  
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RETREAT ISSUE

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### EQUINE THERAPY & RECOVERY

## Head to the Barn to Horse Around

by PAT SAMPLES

Anne K. was having a bad day. An unpleasant experience while shopping set off massive feelings of anxiety. Her husband knew what would calm her. He pulled up on his phone a photo of one of Anne's horses with a rainbow in view behind it. When she saw the photo, she sighed a huge breath of relief.

"My safe place is a horse," says Anne. "I connect with their company, their spirit, their love. When I'm with a horse, I can't think about COVID or any of my stresses." Just seeing a photo of one dispels her anxiety.

Horse lovers like Anne are a special breed. When you ask them, *What is so attractive about horses?* you can count on hearing, "It's about the relationship."

According to Anne and others who are fond of them, horses can be not only great companions, but also teachers and even therapists. Horses are known to be remarkably precise at mirroring what people are thinking and feeling. Also, they only want to be around someone who is authentic, approachable. Their immediate, blunt reactions give clear feedback on whether you're showing up that way or not. Some addicts find their way out of addiction due, in part, to what they learn from horses in equine therapy programs.



### GET UP CLOSE WITH A HORSE

But how can you get anywhere near a horse? Some people like Anne buy them and care for them on their own property. Anne has seven horses on her hobby farm in Carver County. She has a special fondness for acquiring rescue horses, those that have been mistreated or abandoned.

Equine therapy programs offer another way to encounter horses up close. Several can be found at stables within easy driving distance of the Twin Cities.

Monica Rocznak tried equine therapy when deciding whether to retire from her job. "My first experience was so eye-opening," she says. For starters, Monica was extremely fearful of horses. "While I was sitting in the barn for the interview, the barn door opened, and a lady brought a horse through. I was watching and I felt fear go through my heart. The horse picked up on this. It was really startled. It started jumping around. I knew it was responding to my fear. It was so immediate." Adds Rocznak, "I wanted to get past this fear."

Soon after, Monica was standing near a horse in a stall, and the therapist asked her a question. Before she could respond, "The horse started peeing and pooping," says Monica. "The therapist asked me, 'Do you feel like you're being shit on?'"

**HEAD TO THE BARN** to pg 5

## Hiking Tips for Successful Trails

by Ruth Wikoff-Jones

The benefits of time in the outdoors – physical and mental health – are two of the top reasons people head outside. As the Minnesota Ambassador for *Women Who Hike*, I've been privileged to watch women who seek out ways to get outside. I have a glimpse into the reasons they hike. Their concerns, worries and celebrations. Nearly every woman has taken up hiking for the health benefits.

**HIKING TIPS** to pg 12



JOHN H. DRIGGS, LICSW

## Receiving Grace From Your Higher Power

*God speaks to us every day only we don't know how to listen.*

— GANDHI

Unfortunately, too many of us don't believe in a Higher Power, let alone actually listen to that voice within ourselves. It's the guidance that summons us to bring out the better part of ourselves and connect to others in ways that cannot be explained in words. But you know even if we don't listen to the Divine Force, it is still there waiting for us to listen. We miss the miracles that could be happening in our lives because of our skepticism. Deep down we don't feel worthy of love and we turn a deaf ear to our Great Spirit.

Here's what the Higher Power looks like to me:

*A man decides to not return to his AA meeting because he continues to have relapses in his sobriety. Even though he is told that all that is required is the willingness to be sober he tells the man who drives him to his meeting that he is going to skip the next meeting. His driver comes by his house anyway and says, "Look I enjoyed your companionship at the last meeting and I wish you would reconsider helping me and yourself. I need your help. I will respect you if you don't decide to join me."*

*The man is initially bothered by this offer but then gradually comes around and gives his driver a chance to return to the meeting with him. The man realizes that he is good for something. They continue going to AA meetings together and have stayed sober since then. After working the program in AA they both feel they are worth being cared for, the first time either of them has felt that way in their lives. How this has happened neither of them know.*

\*\*

*My wife and I were distant from each other for the longest time. Indeed, generally we were happy with each other. She is a fantastic woman and I have been a decent husband to her. However, there was a certain unexplained emotional gap between us that made each of us sad and lonely. For the longest time we couldn't figure our way out of this. I tend to be brash, and she is compliant. She doesn't want to get me mad, and I want her to be happy. Perhaps we silently blamed each other for our troubles.*

**RECEIVING GRACE** to pg 15



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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

# Stop and Smell the Roses

by Louise Elowen



*"I believe your reality is what you make it, what you choose to see, and what you choose to allow yourself to do. There are possibilities all around you - magic all around you - no matter what situation you're in."*

KEKE PALMER, ACTRESS

As we dig into the second year of the pandemic, a retreat sounds like the ideal place to be. Yet, most of us cannot yet venture far from home, or travel in ways that we were used to in a pre-pandemic world. So, what can you do to "take a retreat," beyond exploring more of your local neighborhood?

*How about learning a new skill? Or starting a hobby?* I know. It doesn't sound much like a retreat! At least, not in the sense of the word that we are used to. But you might be pleasantly surprised. Here's why I think you might like it.

I had been wanting to study with a certain perfume teacher for years, but the stars just never seemed to align. Perfumery study does not come cheaply. Add into that the cost of travel across country via a complicated flight route, and I began to think I just might never achieve my dream. However, the pandemic changed that. Actually, *for the better*. We are so used to hearing negative stories that sometimes we miss the positive stories to come out of this world crisis. It meant that I could now take this class online. *I didn't have to travel.* But I must admit that I did have reservations about studying real perfumery online. How was *that* going to work in a live class?

So, on the first day of the weekend class, I went ahead and set up my computer and my workspace with the perfume kit that we had been sent before class and logged on at the unearthly hour of 7 am (due to a West coast/East coast time difference). I did wonder if I had slightly lost my mind as I crawled out of bed, pushing my sensitive auto-immune stricken body to do something it struggled with at such a ridiculous time. And *this* was something I was doing to *enjoy*?

Louise

But I soon forgot about all that as I spent the next seven hours immersed in the world of scent with ten other students from across the world. Yes, *the world*. Distance evaporated between us and I was ensconced in my own little "retreat," surrounded by my own familiar things in my own home, with a view of my own garden from my own workspace, but now with ten like-minded souls. No airports, no gas station stops, or other people's mindless gripes anywhere. Just pure perfume. Perfume *soul* mates. And an understanding of each other's dreams.

In essence, I had the sense of having been on my own little "retreat" and felt surprisingly *refreshed, reinvigorated, and brimming with new ideas* after taking this time for myself, outside of my usual routine. Who would have thought that such a thing was even *possible* in this unique situation!

The class had connected me with *my people*. It had fed my soul and mind with such much needed support and an appreciation of shared interests. Things I didn't know I was craving until it happened. The pandemic had stolen that from me without me seeing it.

I would like to add that although online connection does not replace in-person connection for everything, during these strange times, it provided me with a solution to my dilemma and gave me a much-needed boost, *mentally*. I felt so much *better* for such a short connection.

So, take a look around. *What do you wish you could do or learn?* Is it possible to now do that in a setting that you hadn't thought of, or wasn't offered, before? You never know, you might literally come up smelling of roses.

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# As Sick As Your Secret

by **Patty Bamford**

I take the subway from Central Park West down to Brooklyn. I'm headed to a party that some old friends from college are having. These are my clique, New York friends who unintentionally make me feel like a country bumpkin. My winter coat didn't look so boxy, and my boots didn't seem that scuffed, until I arrived in NYC where style becomes more apparent. But I don't care. I love the city at Christmas. I walk briskly from the subway toward my friends' apartment, past the funeral home with the neon sign, past the *Kennedy Fried Chicken*. I am freezing, but I feel alive. I am in the middle of my first Christmas season without a drink.

I arrive at the party, ruddy cheeked and out of breath. I surprise myself by naturally joining in conversations. I have things to say! I confidently decline cocktails, wine, and beer, but at this point in my recovery (it is 2004), I have not yet put down the weed. I go ahead and smoke what is offered. I tell myself, "Why not? It's a party!", but within a half hour, a mental fog rolls in and covers me in silence.

I bow out of the kitchen and look for a place to have a quiet cigarette. An old friend turns to me and says, "I know you're not drinking anymore, but I don't know what your deal is with coke. They're doing it in the bathroom if you want some," and she walks away. This is a punch in the gut. I know that doing that would surely lead to a drink. I have nearly four months without one, and I won't throw it away tonight. I scan the apartment and I feel inferior to all these fashionable hipsters, laughing, drinking, always finding things to say to each other.

Then I remember my plan is to sleep here tonight. I have nowhere else to stay, but I am done with this party. Now I realize why people in AA recommend always to have an exit plan at a party with alcohol. I curse myself for lacking a plan and I consider calling someone in the program. Since I've just smoked weed and have been keeping this a secret from people in AA, however, I decide not to use the phone. I recall a member saying, 'You're only as sick as your secrets,' and I know that I am sick in my secrecy about marijuana. I enter my friends' bedroom where the guests' coats are strewn across the bed. Closing the door behind me, I collapse face down on top of all the coats, ignoring the fact that many of them are wool which I am allergic to. The skin on my face and hands winces at the scratchy fabric, but I lay still and hear muffled sounds of the party from the other side of the door. I feel safe on the coats, where I don't have to attempt conversation or beat myself up for having nothing to say. My only concern right now is the increasing irritation of the wool against my skin.



I feel a light pressure on my back, tiny footsteps, and a soft meow. *Oh no, the cats are in here...all three of them!* I am horribly allergic to cats and am now surrounded by them. Almost immediately, I am sneezing, my eyes are burning, and my throat is so itchy that I want to shove the hairbrush on my friend's dresser down my throat just to give it a scratch.

*What a nightmare!* I have a choice to make. I could head back into the party and risk the drink, the cocaine, the conversation... or I could stay in here with the cats and the wool. Either way, I am trapped, but I choose the latter. It's a more manageable, safer kind of pain. I toss some pillows onto the floor and lay on top of them. I allow the cats to strut and traipse on top of me; there's no stopping them. When party guests come in to collect their coats, I pretend I'm asleep. Before too long, I actually do manage to sleep a little. Tomorrow will be a new day.

\*

**"I recall a member saying, 'You're only as sick as your secrets,' and I know that I am sick in my secrecy about marijuana."**

Tomorrow is, indeed, always a new day. Although it took me two and half more years, an arrest for possession, and so much marijuana-induced social anxiety, I finally stopped smoking weed in 2007. I also have always attended AA meetings since 2004. Once I admitted my marijuana use to members, I felt a huge weight lifted. The saying about being sick in my secrets rang true for me. Once I could share freely about my addiction to both alcohol and marijuana, I became ready to find real recovery by getting honest and working the steps. It was no longer necessary for me to hide or lie. I am lucky that my marijuana use did not lead me back to a drink or to other drugs, and one thing that helped was that I never stopped going to meetings. I am now nearly fourteen years clean and sober. I like my time alone and I like my time with people. I no longer freeze or shrink with social anxiety, and I've become comfortable in conversations, no longer needing to either dominate them or disappear in them. I can truly say I am comfortable in my own skin, especially when there are no cats or wool around!

**Patty Bamford** advises recent high school graduates, helping them find their way in college and work. She lives in Rhode Island with her husband and two kids. Please send your 1st Person story to [phoenix@thephoenixspirit.com](mailto:phoenix@thephoenixspirit.com).



## 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.*

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## Resource Directory

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### 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.

### Living Proof MN

Living Proof MN offers a holistic and all-encompassing approach to healing from eating disorders. We know healing comes from within, but that doesn't mean it has to happen alone. We are here to walk alongside you as you take back control and live the life you deserve. We have virtual adult, adolescent, clinician, and supporters groups as well as individual mentoring. Visit [www.LivingProofMN.com](http://www.LivingProofMN.com), email [shira@livingproofmn.com](mailto:shira@livingproofmn.com) or call 612-207-8720.

### Substance Use Disorders

#### Minnesota Teen Challenge

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

### 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).

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

from page 1

"That's exactly how I was feeling at work, not respected." It was the first of many times, Rocznak says, that the horse "reflected back to me where my problems were and where my strengths were. It was powerful work."

Rocznak left behind her stressful job, but she still wanted to get over her fear of horses. Working with a horse trainer later, she learned to brush and groom horses and lead them through movements around the stable, including getting them to follow her.

"I was developing the trust," she says. "I had to learn to be the leader, to get comfortable with that, to feel strong in myself."

At times, she would take her favorite horse out to the pasture just to watch it graze. "The last time I was there," she says, "the horse was out in the pasture, and then she just came to me. It felt so good."

#### MAKE FRIENDS WITH YOURSELF FIRST

Melissa Patterson is an addiction counselor and equine therapist who uses a trauma-based approach to treatment at Stable Living, a therapy-oriented horse farm in the Twin Cities suburb of Minnetrista. Key to her approach is getting clients comfortable in their own bodies. People with addiction, she says, "are used to using chemicals to feel something — or not feel something." She has them slow down, notice what they are seeing, hearing, and smelling — and their emotional state.

"Before you can connect with someone else," she says, "you have to be able to listen to your body and notice what's going on in yourself."

If her client is filled with stress or afraid of horses, Patterson may get the person to pay attention to their own breathing and use other relaxation practices to bring their stress level down. Then she asks them to watch how the horse reacts: Does it want to come over? That pattern of clients noticing their own bodies and then noticing the horse's reactions keeps revealing how well the relationship is going between the person and the horse.

People going through addiction have burned some bridges and may struggle to connect with others, Patterson says. "They are unsure of all kinds of normal social behavioral things. Working with the horse, their brain learns a new pathway for making connections."

"I had a client who would yell, 'Get over here. C'mon.' And that horse did not want to have anything to do with him. He ended up getting so frustrated, and one day he just started to cry. He was able in that moment to feel all those uncomfortable feelings he had, and they were able to come out. When he did that, the horse came up behind him and touched him on the shoulder."

"People learn, if I can do this with this gigantic horse, if I can make this connection, I can go out and do it with others. They feel like: I'm not broken. I'm not damaged. I have value."

#### CARE FOR A HORSE AS A VOLUNTEER

Another option for those interested in horses is to spend time volunteering at one of the twelve This Old Horse sites in Minnesota. The barns there are home to horses no longer wanted by their owners.

As a child, Nancy Turner spent much of her free time in a neighbor's barn caring for horses. In mid-life, wanting to be

around horses again, she decided to create what she calls "a welcoming place for people to come and have a horse in their life."

She has welcomed thousands of volunteers who show up because "they have a heart for horses and compassion," says Turner. They can come anytime and have lots of choices about how to assist the horses, from grooming and feeding them to aiding other volunteers who offer massage, energy healing, and other services to the horses. Some volunteers accompany miniature horses on visits to nursing homes, libraries, and schools. Mostly the volunteers just like being with horses.

"Horses have so much personality. Invariably there is one horse that will resonate with them," says Turner. "It becomes 'their' horse. It's a relationship that develops, and it's intimate. It's like going to see a friend."

Some people volunteer together — couples, families, parent-child pairs. People form community there too. They become friends, even travel together.

"One of our barn managers is getting married," says Turner, "and all of her bridesmaids are people from the barn." Last year a woman, who started as a volunteer and was later hired on as a stable hand, was married at the barn (to another volunteer turned stable hand), and one of the horses walked her down the aisle. The bride, who is blind, had created braille labels for the horse halters to make her work at the barn easier to do.

#### A HORSE COMMUNITY AT HOME

Anne K. cares for her seven horses mostly on her own, with some backup from her husband and son. These horses are her community — her "church," she says. "They are so soothing to me. It's like a privilege to be accepted into their herd as their leader. Their heartbeat matches mine. It's a very symbiotic relationship."

Even when she gets tossed off their backs — which has happened more than once. Each time she's had to remind herself to be more mindful, paying closer attention to what's needed in the relationship. "If you're not listening to them, things can go badly."

Since some of her horses have a history of being mistreated, she is extra sensitive to their anxiety and what creates it. It's a lot like her own, she says. So, she teaches the horse to relax and do yoga breathing alongside her. Standing next to Oz, a gypsy horse, she drops forward exhaling a huge breath of relief, and Oz follows suit.

#### RELATIONSHIPS CAN BE TRICKY

Her own fears mounted after each of her falls. For months she had to rebuild her courage and comfort with the horses. For a few weeks, she would just get up on the horse and get down again. But while on the horse, she paid attention to her breathing — and the horse's breathing as well — to determine when they were both relaxed. Then she got down. It sometimes took months to gently rebuild the trust so she could ride again.

But riding is only a small part of what matters to Anne around her horses. She

spends much of her time just being a friend and caregiver, putting soothing ointment on a sore joint, confiding in their ears, scratching

## Working with the horse, [the client's] brain learns a new pathway for making connections.



their itches, helping them with stretches, and giving care for one horse's asthma and another's impacted tooth. Sometimes she just watches them.

She swears that horses are quite humorous. She says with a big smile on her face that one horse may have even "intentionally dumped me" as a form of teasing. Friends play pranks on each other, she explains, laughing wholeheartedly.

Trotting with Oz around the circle in the large horse barn on her property, Anne and Oz raise up a fog of dust. The clicking sounds in her mouth, the wave of her arms, and her voice commands give direction, and Oz follows her faithfully. Well, not always. Like, in any relationship, you have to keep working on it.

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

**Photos courtesy of This Old Horse** (from top to bottom): Volunteer with her adopted off track Thoroughbred racehorse named Moon; a woman who was receiving hospice who wanted to spend some time with horses as she had done in her youth; volunteer with a horse named George (since passed at age 34 - average horse lives to 25); volunteer with a blind horse named Dude; youth group volunteers (last two).



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Henrik Domnestad via Unsplash.com

## HISTORY OF DRUGS SERIES

# World History of Drugs (Part V)

by George Lewis

The following is part five in a series from author, George Lewis. Opinions expressed in this article are not necessarily the views of The Phoenix Spirit.

The 80s have arrived and the election of Reagan, drugs, and the Nicaraguan Civil War begins the evolution of the Iran-Contra Scandal, the betrayal of America in general and the betrayal of Black and Brown America specifically is about to take place. The mix of politics, drugs, drug policy and scandal will betray Black, Brown and White American citizens in a way that no other President and his administration has ever done. This betrayal will come close to bringing down the Reagan government, as I stated in "Part IV" of this series. The "So Proudly We Hail" statement "The land of the free" is doubtful. America is a country that incarcerates its citizens at a higher rate than any other nation on the planet. In this segment we will look at the part that was played by the following players President Ronald Reagan, Vice President George H.W. Bush, Robert McFarlane (National Security Advisor to Ronald Reagan), and William Joseph Casey (Director of the CIA). The major players, decision makers and the architects of what history will record as the Iran Contra Scandal.

Let us get started at the beginning, with President Ronald Reagan. There were many big foreign policy scandals during the last half of the century and "The Iran Contra Scandal" was one of the biggest. The Reagan Administration with the support and urging of CIA Director William Casey and NSC Advisor Oliver North, secretly and illegally sold arms-for-hostages. To begin with, dealing with America's enemies in the Middle East was illegal. Reagan's administration with the blessing of the CIA and NSC, got Israel to sell weapons from the U.S. to Iran. At that time, Iran had been designated a State Sponsor of Terrorism, and officially America had instituted an arms embargo against Iran but used Israel to exchange American hostages held by Hezbollah, Iran's ally, in Lebanon for American made weapons.

North and Casey went even further down the rabbit hole of illegality as they

took the profits from the arms sales into yet another illegal adventure, a secret plan to support the Contras in Nicaragua which opposed the communist Sandinistas. This was in direct contravention of the Boland Amendments, which Congress had passed from 1982-84, that specifically prohibited the U.S. from supporting the Contras.

#### THE PLOT UNRAVELS POINT BY POINT

- November 3, 1986: Al Shiraa, a Beirut newspaper, was the first to bring the arms-for-hostages plot to light.
- November 21-25, 1986: Oliver North destroyed, or tried to hide, documented communications between Attorney General Edwin Meese and the administration.
- November 25, 1986: Oliver North admits that profits from the weapons sales were used to aid the Contras.
- November 25, 1986: National Security Advisor John Poindexter resigned.
- November 25, 1986: Oliver North was fired by President Reagan.
- March 4, 1987: Reagan broadcast a televised apology to the nation, while minimizing his role.
- June 16, 1992: High ranking officials in Reagan's Administration were indicted on various charges connected to Iran-Contra. Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger was indicted on two counts of perjury and one count of obstruction of justice.
- December 1992: Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger was pardoned by President George H.W. Bush before he was tried. (Remember that Bush was Vice President under Reagan Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training.)

#### THE ROLE OF VICE PRESIDENT GEORGE H.W. BUSH

Throughout the Iran-Contra Affairs, George H.W. Bush was vice president of the United States. During the Walsh investigation, Bush refused to produce his diary entries from those years. Bush was elected president in 1989 and continued

to play a role in the Iran Contra Scandal. On Christmas Eve of 1992, after losing his attempt for a second presidential term to Bill Clinton, Bush pardoned six members of the Reagan administration who had been charged with crimes including perjury, lying to Congress or obstruction of justice. These members were Elliott Abrams, Duane Claridge, Alan Fiers, Jr., Clair George, Robert McFarlane, and Caspar Weinberger.

The area of greatest concern to investigators was Bush's failure to produce relevant diary entries. Despite repeated requests by the Independent Counsel, Bush refused to produce his diary entries. In March 1987, after extensive negotiations between relevant congressional committees, Walsh, and the White House, again submitted a request for the personal and official records. Walsh was specifically looking for the period from the beginning of the Reagan Administration through January 1987. Written documentation existed that showed that Bush and his counsel received and knew about Walsh's request. There was a memorandum to Reagan asking him to produce his diary. That request was initiated by Bush and marked "V.P. Has Seen." Walsh submitted another request for Bush's diaries for the period from mid-1985 until December 1987.

Walsh identified several issues that he wanted to question Bush about, particularly about evidence that seemed to conflict with his previous testimony. For instance, what was his knowledge of Israeli arms sales to Iran and his 1986 meeting with Israeli official Amiram Nir? Did he know about the quid-pro-quo deal countries that pledged to support the Contras? And what about his and Vice-Presidential National Security Adviser Donald Gregg's meetings with National Security Council staff member Oliver North?

President George H.W. Bush granted pardons on December 24, 1992, to six defendants in the Iran-Contra Affairs. He pardoned former CIA officials Duane

Clarridge, Alan Fiers, Jr., Elliott Abrams, a former assistant secretary of state for Central America, former National Security Adviser Robert McFarlane, and Clair George, and former Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger. These men all had information that would have shed light on the illegal activities of the Reagan administration.

#### THE ROLE OF ROBERT MCFARLANE (NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR TO RONALD REAGAN)

After Congress passed the Boland Amendment banning aid to the Contras, which led Reagan to ask McFarlane to find a way to keep the cause of the rebels alive, McFarlane responded to the President's request by assigning NSC staff member Oliver North to that job. He claimed later that he told North not to violate the law to raise money for the Contras. McFarlane served as Reagan's national security adviser from October 1983 to December 1985.

McFarlane pleaded guilty to four misdemeanors in March of 1988. He pleaded guilty to:

- Lying to Lee Hamilton, Chair of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. He said, "I can state with deep personal conviction that at no time did I or any member of the National Security Council staff violate the letter or spirit of the law. We did not solicit funds or other support for military or paramilitary activities."
- Lying to Michael Barnes, Chair of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs. He said, "My actions, and those of my staff, have been in compliance with both the spirit and the letter of the law. None of us has solicited funds, facilitated contacts for prospective potential donors, or otherwise organized or coordinated the military or paramilitary efforts."
- He lied again to Hamilton. He said, "North did not use his influence to facilitate the movement of supplies to the resistance."
- He lied to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs. He said, "I have seen the reports and I have heard that the [nationals of such third country] have contributed. The concrete character of that is beyond my ken."

McFarlane received a sentence of two years' probation and 200 hours of community service, plus he was ordered to pay a \$20,000 fine. President George H.W. Bush pardoned him in 1992.<sup>3</sup>

#### THE ROLE OF WILLIAM CASEY (DIRECTOR OF THE CIA)

William Casey served as director of Central Intelligence from 1981 until January 1987, during the Reagan presidency. The record shows that Iran-Contra Independent Counsel Lawrence E. Walsh had no choice but to pursue evidence about

*These politicians whose duty it was to protect America's interest, follow the law, and keep us safe, had instead sold us out for their own ideology.*

from page 6

Casey's role when he was forced to resign due to a severe brain tumor. Walsh didn't try to establish guilt or innocence. He knew that Casey would never be able to defend himself given the severity of the tumor, which ultimately took his life in May 1987.

- Casey supported the arms sales to Iran. He had his own agenda as he wanted to win the release of former CIA Lebanese Station Chief William Buckley.
- North claimed that Casey supported that action, but there was again no independent evidence that this was the case, and North only made this accusation after Casey had died.
- Casey was given evidence of this transfer in late 1986, and he did not respond.
- Walsh had many concerns regarding Casey's testimony to Congress on November 21, 1986.
- Casey hid the CIA's role in collecting intelligence on Iran and Lebanon, and the role of some individuals that was a part Iran initiative, like the arms dealer Manucher Ghorbanifar.
- He told the CIA flight crew that the cargo was oil-drilling equipment but the agents realized what the cargo was and reported it to their superiors that there was the presence of missiles in the cargo.

These politicians whose duty it was to protect America's interest, follow the law, and keep us safe, had instead sold us out for their own ideology. These men were the Kings, Knights, and Bishops on this chess board of world history. They would use their power to make decisions that would turn out to be the biggest drug epidemic in American history. In "Part

VI" of the World History of Drugs, you will meet the pawns in this game. You will learn how these powerful men used and abused the lives of the pawns in this scandalous affair and ultimately how the American public has, and still is, suffering for the decisions they made. Meet the pawns in this chess game: Oliver North (NSA Staff Member), Adler Berriman "Barry" Seals (Medellin Cartel Pilot), Oscar Danilo Blandon (Drug Dealer and CIA informant), Rick Ross (Drug Dealer and Scapegoat) and Gary Webb (Newspaper Reporter destined to be thrown under the bus by his colleagues). Before this is over one will become rich, one will leave the country, one will go to prison and the rest will die.

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**George Lewis** is founder and CEO of Motivational Consulting, Inc. and has more than 18 years of experience in the human services industry. His website is [motivationalconsultinginc.com](http://motivationalconsultinginc.com).

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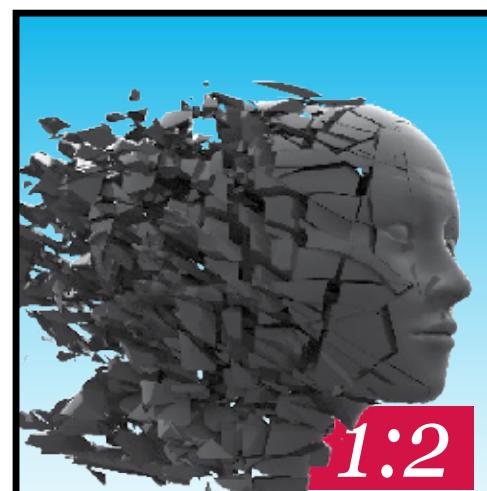


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1:2

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# Retreat Directory

The following is just a partial list of the many retreat centers throughout Minnesota 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

Rooms available from November-April in historic house on 330 acres in the bluff-land region of the upper Mississippi.  
[www.andersoncenter.org/visit/rentals](http://www.andersoncenter.org/visit/rentals)

**The Grand Marais Art Colony**  
Grand Marais, MN  
218-387-2737

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

**Tofte Lake Center**  
Ely, MN  
218-365-7769

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.  
[www.toftelake.com](http://www.toftelake.com)

## FAMILIES COPING WITH AN ILL CHILD OR LOSS

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

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

## NATURE RETREATS

**Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center**  
Sandstone, MN  
320-245-2648

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.  
[ospreywilds.org](http://ospreywilds.org)

**Boundary Waters Canoe Area**  
Northern MN  
218-626-4300

The BWCA is a 1,098,000-acre wilderness area within the Superior National Forest. [www.fs.usda.gov](http://www.fs.usda.gov).

## SPIRITUAL / RECOVERY

**ARC Retreat Community**  
Stanchfield, MN  
763-689-3540

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. We welcome you. Labyrinth, fire circle, library, chapel, meeting rooms.  
[www.arc retreat.org](http://www.arc retreat.org)

**Benedictine Center of St. Paul's Monastery**  
St. Paul, MN  
651-777-7251

Contemporary monastic environment of Benedictine Sisters. [www.benedictinecenter.org/services/personal-retreats](http://www.benedictinecenter.org/services/personal-retreats).

**Christ the King Retreat Center**  
Buffalo, MN  
763-682-1394

Oblates of Mary Immaculate offer accommodations in a retreat house that overlooks Lake Buffalo. Each day, besides the celebration of the Eucharist, the retreatant meets with a director to talk about his or her personal journey and experience of God. The rest of the time is spent in solitude and silence relaxing, praying, reading and reflecting.  
[www.kingshouse.com/private-retreats](http://www.kingshouse.com/private-retreats)

**Demontreville Jesuit Retreat House**  
Lake Elmo, MN  
651-777-1311

Each year more than 3,000 men from all walks of life participate in retreats at the Demontreville Jesuit Retreat House. Retreats at Demontreville have one theme: to know, love, and serve God in this world. Strict silence is maintained throughout the weekend, except for an optional recreation period after dinner on Friday and Saturday.  
[demontrevilleretreat.com](http://demontrevilleretreat.com)

## SPIRITUAL / RECOVERY

**Dan Anderson Renewal Center**  
Center City, MN  
1-866-398-2746

Retreat lodge for those living the 12-Step recovery program. 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.  
[www.hazeldenbettyford.org](http://www.hazeldenbettyford.org)

**Center for Spirituality and Enrichment / McCabe Renewal Center**  
Duluth, MN  
218-724-5266

The Center for Spirituality and Enrichment provides opportunities for holistic spiritual and personal growth grounded in the Catholic Benedictine tradition of St. Scholastica Monastery.  
[retreatduluth.org](http://retreatduluth.org)

**The Fields at Rootsprings**  
Annandale, MN  
612-888-6445 (call or text)

Personal and small group retreats centering healing for BIPOC and LGBTQ. 36 acres with 3 cozy hermitages. Sauna, massage, and reflective space in Wellness Center. Walking paths in woods, labyrinth through the prairie, and small spring-fed lake.  
[www.rootspringsmn.org](http://www.rootspringsmn.org)

**Lakeplace Retreat Center**  
Isanti, MN  
218-245-1395

Provided by The Fellowship Foundation, The Lakeplace Retreat Center is a family owned business operated by three generations, as well as a dedicated staff, all sharing their strength, hopes, and experiences. Located on a remote lake in Northern Minnesota, all living facilities are surrounded by acres of birch, pine, and hardwoods. Lakeplace is an ideal setting providing a non-institutional atmosphere reminiscent of a resort where time for reflection, fellowship, and sober recreation is a key element.  
[www.lakeplacecenter.com](http://www.lakeplacecenter.com)

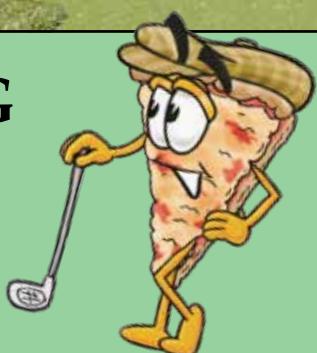
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[wheelfunrentalsmn.com](http://wheelfunrentalsmn.com)



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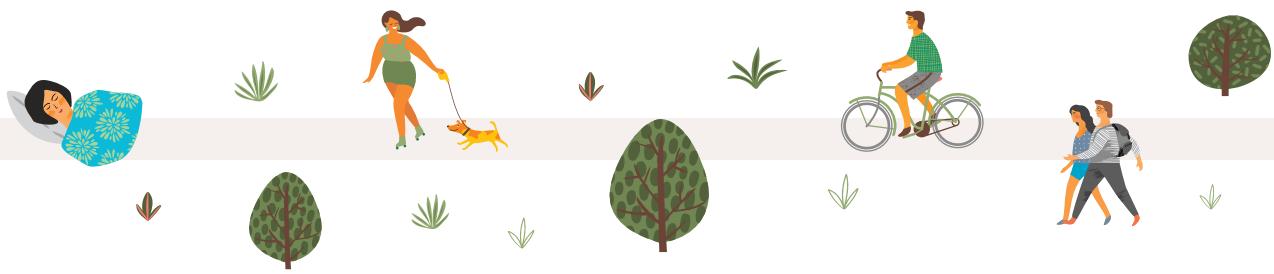
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ARC  
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## SPIRITUAL / RECOVERY

**The Retreat / McIver Center**  
Wayzata, MN  
866-928-3434

We believe spirituality is critical to a successful and fulfilling life and recovery. The McIver Center is available for use by private groups and is also available to Twelve Step Groups, spiritual communities, outside groups, and organizations. Our 18 bed facility can accommodate groups of 24 for daytime events. Our staff is available to work with each group to help shape and personalize their retreat experience.

[www.theretreat.org/programs/weekend-retreats/private-group-retreats](http://www.theretreat.org/programs/weekend-retreats/private-group-retreats)

**The Spirituality Center at St. Benedict's Monastery**  
St. Joseph, MN  
320-363-7112

Sisters of the Order of Saint Benedict offer rooms at their Spirituality Center, Studium and two hermitages located near a labyrinth, walking paths and woods. Due to COVID-19, some programs have been canceled.

[www.sbm.osb.org](http://www.sbm.osb.org)

## SPIRITUAL / RECOVERY

**St. John's Abbey Guesthouse**  
Collegeville, MN  
320-363-2573

Benedictine monks offer 30 rooms in their guesthouse that also has a meditation chapel, library, meeting rooms, and dining room. On the campus at St. John's University. Plans to re-open June 1.

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

## RESORT

**Waldheim Resort**  
Finlayson, MN  
320-321-9096

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.

[www.waldheimresort.com](http://www.waldheimresort.com)

## EQUINE THERAPY

**Acres for Life Therapy and Wellness Center**  
Forest Lake, MN  
651-257-4159

Believes in the power of connection through experiential therapy and learning to bring hope, healing, and capability to our community.

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

## Equul Access

Hutchinson, MN  
320.234.7895

Equul Access, Inc. provides therapeutic equine assisted activities for individuals with physical, cognitive and/or emotional needs.

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

## Four Directions Behavioral Health

Prior Lake, MN  
952-715-0007

Four Directions Behavioral Health practices equine psychotherapy. Licensed clinical therapists – and horses – work closely with individuals to address every part of their being. In addition to equine therapy, we also offer traditional in-office therapy or a combination of the two.

[www.fourdirectionsmn.com](http://www.fourdirectionsmn.com)

## EQUINE THERAPY

**Freedom Farm**  
Waverly, MN  
952-955-2505

Freedom Farm partners with the unique gifts of the horse to offer healing, hope, confidence and strength.

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

**Stable Living**  
Minnetrista, MN  
952-240-1621

Stable Living specializes in helping people find health and happiness on their 23 acre farm, through in-office and equine-assisted psychotherapy. Stable Living provides a safe, healing environment for clients who are processing difficult issues.

[www.stableliving.us](http://www.stableliving.us)

**This Old Horse**  
Hastings, MN  
651-437-1889

This Old Horse's mission is to support and serve horses while they continue to serve as ambassadors to the positive effect of "horse power" in the lives of people.

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

[www.waldheimresort.com](http://www.waldheimresort.com)

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**Heather Jeffrey,**  
MA, LADC, CTC  
Acres for Life

*Eagala Model Equine Assisted Psychotherapy Advanced Certified Practitioner, ARCH founding member*

*In 2007 Heather joined the Acres for Life team. Heather loves all aspects of equine assisted psychotherapy including facilitating sessions, herd and facilities care, program development, horse and human resources, community outreach etc. Heather holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Conservation and Biology and a Masters in Integrated Recovery for Co-occurring Disorders and has years of experience working with individuals, groups, families and youth in a variety of experiential learning and therapy modalities. Heather is the Chief Operations Officer at Acres for Life and is working towards her hours for LPCC licensure.*

## Q What is Equine Assisted Psychotherapy (EAP)?

Equine Assisted Psychotherapy is an experiential approach to therapy and healing. It does not involve any riding, instead, all of the work is done on the ground with the horses loose in a herd environment. Instead of sitting and talking in an office, clients are out moving in the pastures and arenas, experiencing the learning. Because it does not involve riding, the horses and the clients are free to move about the space as they need to. The horses and the spaces/pastures/etc become metaphor or symbol for clients in their life story ~ perhaps there is a horse out there that reminds someone of themselves, or another important relationship in their life, or a feeling, or incident etc ~ through being able to identify those connections clients are able to explore their relationships with these things in life. They are able to self-distance from what has maybe been feeling stuck and can get new perspectives and insights! Clients can also practice coping skills and new approaches to interactions and responses. The horses are catalysts for change and much can be learned from being able to observe and interact with the herd!

## Q What types of needs and challenges can be addressed through Equine Assisted Psychotherapy?

Equine Assisted Psychotherapy can

### EQUINE THERAPY FOR RECOVERY

## Ask the Expert

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

be used by anyone to address any need or challenge as it is very adaptable. Because it is experiential, every session is different and based on the client's needs! Our clients have ranged in age from 3 to 97. We can work with individuals, families, couples, and groups. Some of the main areas in which we work are mental health and wellness, addiction recovery, community support, empowerment, etc. Some of the mental health concerns that we commonly work with are: PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder), depression, anxiety, grief and loss, ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder), ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder), ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder), FASD (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders), RAD (Reactive Attachment Disorder), OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder), ODD (Oppositional Defiant Disorder), eating disorder, addictions, personality disorders, etc. That being said, clients are never a diagnosis at the farm! They are a being out with other beings, moving forward in their lives!

**Q** Can you explain more about how Equine Assisted Psychotherapy works and describe the therapeutic approach?

It works because clients are able to externalize things that maybe have been feeling stuck inside of them. For example, we had a client years ago who was struggling with suicidal ideation. Nothing seemed to be working! They came out for an equine assisted psychotherapy session. On that day there were 8 horses in the sunshine, grazing together in a group, and one horse stood alone in the back of the shed with his head towards the corner. The client upon entering the pasture went directly to the horse that was alone. She stayed with that horse for the entire session – talking to him, petting him, and crying. Upon checking in with the client at the end of the session we asked her what had happened out there. She began to tell us about this horse – "she feels so alone" "she doesn't think anyone cares for her" "no one even remembers that she isn't there" and as she went on we knew that she was telling us her story through this horse. Her following sessions became about her moving this horse back into community, in the sunshine - and as she helped this horse find community, she too found community!

Our approach is experiential and so it is highly adaptable to whatever the client needs and the horses bring forward. Through being able to externalize the pain or struggles a client is having they can get some distance on it and find new perspectives and things begin to unlock! It isn't

about talking, it is about doing and experiencing. Every client has a human team of a qualified mental health professional and an equine specialist and their horse herd. The human team helps facilitate the session as they bring in aspects of the client's treatment goals. Clients can talk as much or little as they feel comfortable! The horses become metaphors and symbols for clients as they share what is happening in their life. Perhaps they see an interaction in the herd that looks like a relationship they are in for example! The human team's goal is to hold the space for the client's story to come out and support the process, asking externalizing questions and helping to create opportunities to explore various aspects of what they are dealing with through: observation, relationship, movement, and creation amongst other methods!

**Q** How can EAP support my recovery?

EAP is a way for clients in recovery to put their recovery into action. It gets the steps to living life in recovery and puts them into action as opposed to keeping them in their head. Reciting the 12 Steps does not mean that there are behavioral shifts for example! Working with the horses, clients have the opportunity to ask clearly for what they need. They can experience surrender and also powerlessness. They can put into action in a safe place moving their life into recovery instead of trying to fit recovery into their old life! There will be times a client is triggered and in this space they are able to explore different responses to this trigger in a safe place free from judgment and expectation. They can practice coping skills and approaches!

We had a group out years ago ~ and they were trying to move their life into recovery. They had an area marked out by cones that was their "recovery life raft" and they needed to gather there with each other and the three things they identified that they would need to live in recovery. They identified "Fellowship" "Higher Power" and "Serenity". They affixed labels to three horses that could each represent one of these three things and then set to work – splitting up to get the three things they could need and deciding to meet back at the "raft". "Fellowship" came easily, walking along with them as they headed towards their recovery life raft. During that time, "Higher Power" had actually moved there by himself! So there they were, several of the guys in the raft with "Fellowship" and "Higher Power". "Serenity" though wasn't as easy to come by! The guys who had gone to

bring "Serenity" back were struggling. They pushed and pulled and sweated and sweated and "Serenity" was not budging. All the guys left "Fellowship" and "Higher Power" in the raft and all came down to try and move "Serenity" - still he wouldn't budge. Finally they all threw up their hands and went back to the raft and gathered back up "Fellowship" and "Higher Power" and it was at That Moment that "Serenity" lifted his head and walked towards them and joined them at the raft! THAT is how EAP works! They went on to process serenity and surrender and powerlessness and working in fellowship to find recovery.

**Q** Does the horse need to go through any special training?

The horses do not need to go through any special training as we want them to be them! Horses are incredibly intuitive and can read non-verbals, and so we want them interacting authentically! That being said, we do interviews with the horses before they become part of the team. We want to know what their go-to response/reaction is to people being people. We touch them all over, lift their feet, pet, run, cry, sit, throw something in the air etc. — we want to know how they will react! If their first response is to bite or kick they are not a good fit! If they are curious, or move away, or respond in other ways, great! We also work with them outside of session to provide whatever they may need when it comes to exercise – physically and mentally!

**Q** Would I need any special knowledge or riding experience to benefit from EAP?

Nope! There is no horse experience necessary. It is not about horsemanship or anything like that. It is about relationship and connection!

**Q** What if I am afraid of horses, can I still participate in EAP?

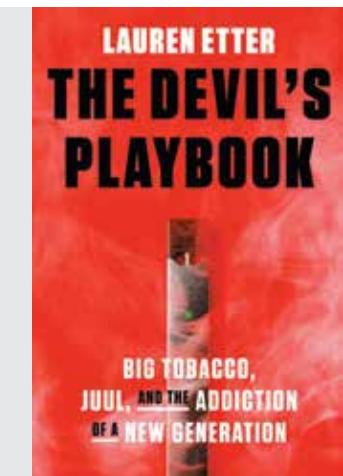
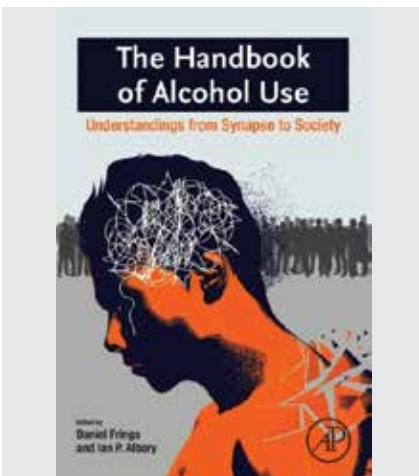
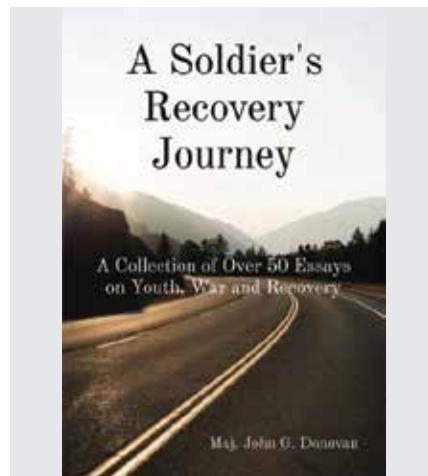
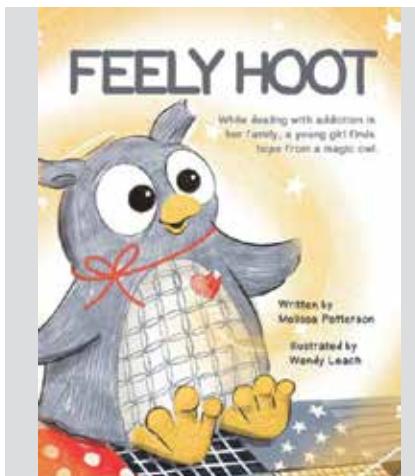
Absolutely! Because they are in a herd environment out in a large space, you can choose how close or far to get. You have your human team there for support as well! You can choose who you want to interact with and how! Some clients choose to stay outside of the fence and observe from there ~ that is fine too! The fence then becomes part of the story ~ i.e. what does the fence represent that you can stay on the other side of when facing things that you fear. The horses being large, unknown, and powerful, etc all becomes part of the story because that is how life can feel sometimes!

*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.*





# Books



## Feely Hoot

By Melissa Patterson  
SELF-PUBLISHED

*Feely Hoot* is a must have book to help children cope with addiction in the family. It's a book that expresses hope and bravery and reminds children they can make a difference in their lives and others.

Melissa Patterson MA, LPC, LADC, NCC is a Licensed Professional Counselor, Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor, and a Licensed School Counselor in Minnesota. She is a therapist working with youth through young adulthood. She also helps families build skills to process difficult life transitions.

## A Soldier's Recovery Journey

A Collection of Over 50 Essays on Youth, War and Recovery

By John G. Donovan  
SELF-PUBLISHED

This book is part instructional and part biographical. The author shares intimate details of his life within it as well as lessons learned from his journey of recovery. It is meant for the newcomer who is learning to cope with life on life's terms and for the old-timer who may have forgotten that we cannot rest upon our laurels.

## The Handbook of Alcohol Use

Understandings from Synapse to Society

Edited by Daniel Frings and Ian P. Albery  
ELSEVIER SCIENCE

This book explores an eclectic set of methodological and conceptual tools to create a more diverse understanding of alcohol use, misuse and treatment. Moving past the understanding of alcohol usage through the lens of a disease-based model, this book approaches the topic from individual cognition, small group/system social interactions, and population studies.

## The Devil's Playbook

Big Tobacco, Juul, and the Addiction of a New Generation

By Lauren Etter  
CROWN (RELEASE DATE: MAY 25, 2021)

*The Devil's Playbook* is the inside story of how Juul's embodiment of Silicon Valley's "move fast and break things" ethos wrought havoc on American health, and how a beleaguered tobacco company was seduced by the promise of a new generation of addicted customers. With both companies' eyes on the financial prize, neither anticipated the sudden outbreak of vaping-linked deaths that would terrorize a nation.

If you have a book you'd like featured or have an old favorite you'd like to share with others, please contact us at [phoenix@thephoenixspirit.com](mailto:phoenix@thephoenixspirit.com).

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My journey to hiking was rather accidental. My son, a Boy Scout, signed up for a high adventure trip to Philmont Scout Ranch for 10 days of backpacking. It sounded like a wonderful experience to share with him. At 47 years old I signed up to be an adult advisor for the group. I had no idea what I was getting into. We trained for months. Then, on the top of a ridge in the Carson National Forest I had my catharsis. I realized fear had held me back from leading an adventurous life. I committed to take more risks and in the process, I was deeply changed.

The beautiful thing about hiking is that it's simply walking. You don't need the best or most expensive gear. There is likely a wonderful place not far from your doorstep to do it. Even in a city.

I've leaned into hiking as a way to deal with challenges, build friendships and slow down. An hour on a trail calms me and gives me a fresh perspective. The trails in Minnesota and beyond have presented me with time to deal with the loss of my mom, becoming an empty nester, a job loss and more. I altered my adventures during the pandemic by challenging myself to "micro adventures" in my community. I've processed the complicated questions of social justice and colonialism with dirt under my feet. Trails feel like home. I'm happiest sleeping under the stars in the woods away from the bustle of civilization. Whenever I need to destress or work through a challenging decision, I make my way to a hiking trail.

Through my son's Scouting experience, I was introduced to people who taught the skills needed to take a short walk in the woods or an adventure in the wilderness. I learned my limits and to respect them when situations didn't feel right. I took classes on first aid and navigation. I've learned resilience, to fall and get back up again. I was vulnerable by asking questions. I kept getting outside over and over again.

#### GETTING STARTED

When I first started hiking, I wasn't really aware of how many trails were right in my neighborhood, let alone anywhere else. I had an idea that hikers were adventurers taking on big mountains and needed expensive gear. What I learned is that getting started can be pretty simple. Start with the basics and add gear as you go. The basic things to consider are:

*Whenever I need to destress or work through a challenging decision, I make my way to a hiking trail.*

- Finding a trail
- What the weather will be like
- What you'll wear
- What to bring along
- Communicating your plan.

#### FINDING A TRAIL

There are so many trails, often right outside of your front door or nearby. A slight shift of perspective on what constitutes a trail opens up options. For me it's meant dirt under my feet despite knowing there are really good, paved trails to explore. I've found city, county and state park department's websites helpful. Many parks have maps online for download or printing before you go.

Another way to find trails is with a phone app. Hikers use AllTrails, Avenza, Gaia GPS or Strava. Each offers similar features; most have a free option in addition to a paid one (with more features) and they all nearly work even if you don't have cell service. My personal choice is AllTrails. I used the free version until I was sure I liked it and then upgraded to the Pro version. The pro version allows me access to download maps, record my hikes and to share my hike information.

Trail options can be overwhelming so start small. Pick somewhere near home and expand from there as you gain more experience and confidence.

#### CHECK THE WEATHER

Check the weather forecast in the location you are hiking on the day that you are hiking. Knowing this information will help you to determine what you need to wear and bring with you. Or even cancel if the weather conditions aren't safe. I can't stress enough that you do this for *the place that you are hiking*, not where you live, even if it's only an hour away. Weather can vary in just a few miles. A hike on a lake shore will have different conditions from a hike just a few miles away in a forest. Of all the steps in hiking this is one I never skip.

#### DRESS APPROPRIATELY

After you've checked the weather, you'll have a better idea of what to wear. My rule of thumb is to keep my feet happy first because if they aren't, I will be miserable. Hiking footwear doesn't have to be expensive. It needs to be well fitting so that your feet won't slide around.

You'll be less likely to get blisters or twist your ankle on uneven trails.

In the past, hiking boots were considered a must. Now there are so many options including trail runners, tennis shoes, fitted sandals like *Chacos* or *Keen*. The primary feature is that they can be tightened to your foot. No matter what you're considering, I am adamant in recommending getting fitted at a reputable store. They can help you narrow the options quickly by asking a few questions. Getting this right during the first time is less costly in the end. It's also important to pair your shoes and socks. Try footwear on with the socks you plan to wear so you don't end up with blisters or sore spots.

Clothing choices also impact your comfort. Layering is important so that you stay warm and dry during the winter, and cool in the summer. *Get too warm?* Take a layer off. *Feeling a chill?* Add a layer. As you move, your body generates heat so starting out a bit cold is a good idea. You'll warm up as you go.

In general hiking is one of the activities where cotton is not a good idea. Cotton acts as a sponge to gather and



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hold water. Wearing it will hold moisture close to your body and start your body's cooling process whether you want to or not. The preferred choices for hiking clothing are synthetics, silk or merino wool (not your grandma's itchy sweater wool! This is soft and insulates you when it's wet). All of these will wick the moisture away from your body and still provide insulation.

The most common layering system includes:

1. **Base Layer:** Silk, synthetic or wool fabric sits close to your skin, wicks moisture and provides insulation.
2. **Mid or Insulating Layer:** Most often a down or synthetic fleece sweater or jacket, it can also be referred to as a "soft shell."
3. **Wind/Water Resistant Layer:** A rain jacket or "hard shell," many include Gortex or a similar product allowing for the fabric to breathe.

Remember that you can wear things you already have to get started. Thrift shops, online marketplaces and sales are great options if you are on a budget. There's no sense in spending a lot of money only to find out that hiking isn't for you.

#### WHAT TO BRING ALONG

Every hiker has opinions on what to bring on a hike for their comfort and safety. A few things to consider bringing are dependent on weather, and where and how long you'll be hiking. I carry the Ten Essentials on every hike, even in the city. I alter the list depending on who I will be with, how long we will be out and where we are going. The *Ten Essentials* include:

1. **Navigation:** Printed map and/or navigation app.
2. **Sun Protection:** Sunscreen, hat, and sunglasses.
3. **Insulation:** Extra clothes and socks, rain jacket and pants appropriate for any changes in weather.
4. **Illumination:** Headlamp or flashlight.
5. **First Aid Supplies:** Medications, band aids, foot care items and bug repellent.
6. **Fire:** Matches or lighter.
7. **Knife and Repair Kit:** Duct tape and zip ties.
8. **Food:** Extra snacks appropriate for how many people will be with you and how long you'll be out.
9. **Water:** Bring more than you think you'll need and/or a way of filtering water.
10. **Emergency Shelter:** Tent, tarp, or emergency space blanket.

All of these items should fit in a small backpack. Start with a pack that you have and upgrade as you determine how much and where you will be hiking. I have a dedicated pack for hiking use. I check it just before I go out to make sure that it has everything I've replenished on my last hike. When I get home, I restock it so it's ready the next time that I want to hike.

#### COMMUNICATING YOUR PLAN

I've spent a lot of time hiking alone both near my home and in remote locations. No matter what, I let someone in my family know when I head out for a

hike, where I'm going, and when I expect to be back. The same is true if I'm meeting friends for a hike. Doing this ensures I have a person making sure that I'm ok or who will get help if I'm not. I also check in with Park Rangers/staff when I arrive at a park where staff are available. It allows me to get last minute updates on any conditions, wildlife, or things to see. For solo hikers it's also an opportunity to let someone at the park know that you are on the trails. In some places where permits are required, it's mandatory to check in before heading on the trail.

The most important part of hiking is to start. Be prepared to be challenged and learn. Know it won't always be easy. It's in the hard places where you'll get the most benefit.

*Ruth Wikoff-Jones is the author of Ruth's Blue Marble blog ([www.ruthsbluemarble.com](http://www.ruthsbluemarble.com)), an ambassador for Women Who Hike Minnesota, an advocate for outdoor spaces and a Leave No Trace Trainer. Contact her at [ruthsbluemarble@hotmail.com](mailto:ruthsbluemarble@hotmail.com) for more information on how to get started on your hiking adventure.*

**Think of all the beauty still left around you and be happy.**

ANNE FRANK



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Finally, something unusual happened in my sleep one night. I had a surprising dream. My mother spoke to me, saying, "Please remember the Golden rule: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Then Pogo, a Walt Kelly cartoon critter, spoke to me and said, "We have met the enemy and it is us." I was troubled by this dream. I felt some divine presence was trying to save my marriage. Finally, in the morning it dawned on me that I'd been repeatedly irritable with my wife just when she was nice to me. She just wanted me to speak with her in a kind way and acknowledge how hard she was trying to love me. Her passivity, which I didn't like, was in reaction to my brusque tone with her. I was essentially rejecting her efforts to care for me. I was making her the problem which was really my problem. I was breaking the Golden Rule with her. Perhaps unconsciously I didn't feel worthy of her love. I felt ashamed of myself, told her about my dreams and apologized to her in the morning. The distance between us gradually disappeared. I felt a Higher Power between us, the very spiritual presence that had originally brought us together.

+

Our 10-year-old son is a different kind of boy. He is so unlike his older brothers and sisters all of whom play football, soccer and hockey. He prefers to grow flowers, plant wild grasses, read poetry and draw pictures of nature. His mother and I support him being who he is and leave it up to him to be himself. He does well in school, is well-liked but keeps to himself a lot. He loves his siblings, but they don't share many interests together. We live in a rather homogeneous suburban area where sports teams are the way kids relate to each other. We wondered if there might be something wrong with him but we could never find out what that something really is. Throughout this pandemic he has shown us more of who he is. Last spring, he saw a program on TV about all the children who are hungry, who can't go to school because they lack good Internet connections, and some of whom have to live on the street. He was in tears when he saw the program and told us he wanted to do something over the summer to help these kids. So, he did some odd jobs for us and the neighbors to collect money for these children. He enlisted several friends who would also contribute money, food and tutoring for these kids. He went on-line and collected over \$5,000 in three months, set up a peer-to-peer tutoring service for needy kids and enlisted the help of neighbors to deliver all the food. He mowed lawns and planted native grasses for neighbors. Lately he decided to turn over his organization to a community group that will continue his efforts as he returns to school and study horticulture as his long-term goal. His mother and I were amazed at his leadership and the gifts he gave to all the neighborhood. Several of them have planted their own native gardens in their well-groomed yards. We knew he was a sensitive kid but not like this! We have no worries now about him being different as we see now how him being different can change the world. He is also a big hit with his siblings!

Now these examples may sound too good to be true. But I want to assure you

that they actually happened, even though I am not sure how they happened. I just think some big force just took over and brought everybody to a bigger view of life and what we are capable of when we trust a Higher Power. Perhaps a spark happened when the recovering alcoholic was caught off-guard by his friend's refusal to give up on him and his friend's humility to let him know that despite failing sobriety, he still has a larger purpose in life. Perhaps the husband's dreams already existed in some unconscious way during the day, but he was too scared to embrace them and too proud to accept his own failings in the light of day. Perhaps the miracle of the sensitive child didn't just begin from watching the TV program but from how the parents decided all along to accept him for being different and letting their son show his true colors. The divine parts of life happen to us when we show a willingness to receive these gifts and allow ourselves to trust in the uncertainty and joy of love. They often occur in magical moments of relationships when something just falls into place mysteriously if it were predestined.

#### WHAT BLOCKS US FROM RECEIVING GRACE?

Let us return to our earlier quote above about God always talking to us even when we turn deaf ears to his message. You don't have to be religious, go to church or pray to God. You don't even have to believe in God or give up your cynicism. All you have to do is be open to the unknown in your relationships to others and see where it takes you. Some of us give up on the ambiguities of life and love. We only trust what we can clearly see, hear, explain, and trust. We've lost our ability to wonder, and we think that people who believe in the unknowns of life have lost their mind. Many of us would never embrace native American spiritual practices or poetry. Yet a good portion of the world does embrace the subjective experiences of life and its daily practices in their lives. Mostly we don't want to yield to a Higher Power because we don't want to feel foolish and betrayed as we were in our childhood. Our first experiences of the Divine are through our early attachment to our parents. They were our Gods for better or worse. If those relationships let us down, then it is much harder today to believe in a Spiritual World.

It is a myth to think that we don't need God in our life. Each of us, at some point in our life, faces difficulties that are bigger than ourselves. If we have an active relationship to a Divine Presence, we will undoubtedly face many of those painful experiences. God does not spare us from pain but at least we don't have to face the pain alone. We can and will get succor in our transcendent connections to God through others. We will never be alone. Sometimes we even get saved by those connections without knowing how that happened.

#### HOW CAN YOU RECOGNIZE YOUR GREAT SPIRIT?

Being in touch with your Higher Power takes more than dialing him up on your cell phone. Each of us have his or her unique way of relating to a Great Spirit. Some of the ways that you can detect something bigger than life is happening in your life is when:

- Your connections to fellow recovering people become more important to you

than your addictive cravings and you begin losing your cravings.

- You give up trying to control another person and let the universe take you to where things need to go.
- You feel gratitude regularly for all the caring people in your life and you express your thanks to them.
- You notice someone you stereotype or dislike and give that person a chance in your life, trying to see what may be good about this person and you find something you like in them.
- You begin to see the bigger picture in a conflict between you and another person and you patch things up with that person.
- You develop some deeper empathy towards someone who has harmed you and you forgive that person.
- You find ways to forgive yourself by atoning to others whom you have hurt and seeing your personal failings in a more accepting light.
- You show compassion to people who are different from you and see things from their point of view as you slowly become closer to them.
- You pay attention to your dream life and develop some awareness of their personal meaning to you.
- You develop a knack for seeing deeper strengths in yourself and other people and make that more important than their weaknesses.
- You find connections with others that go beyond practical considerations and make ties to people you typically would not befriend.
- You spend moments of prayer and self-reflection and have revelations that make you a bigger person.
- You open yourself to the transcendent aspects of life, having chance experiences with strangers that are mutually significant.

When you become aware of something happening in your life that is bigger than yourself be sure to savor that experience and share it with someone you trust. Your confidante may also share similar experiences that he or she has had. Hang on to the memory of your spiritual awakening in your own life journey. You can become so adept at these realizations that God may speak to you daily and often. The more open you are to the Divine, the more often God will talk with you and securely guide your daily life.

#### HOW TO KINDLE YOUR OWN SPIRITUAL LIFE

Once again all I can do is share what I do to foster my own spiritual life and you can adapt from it what will help your own. I like to reflect each day on how well I am doing on being a bigger person or not. I sometimes ask the Great Spirit directly to help me see myself more honestly and I ask my wife to give me feedback. I simply listen and don't argue with the feedback. Sometimes I have to sleep on things over night and they come to me during the night or morning, often in a dream state. I think of God as an important part of myself, whose presence can comfort and challenge me. I enjoy sharing spiritual reflections with others from my church and I gain from helping them with their personal struggles. It took many attempts in my church shopping to find a spiritual home that sits well with me.

Actually, what I find is the more you express caring for others, especially to people you feel close to or to people you don't like very much, the more likely you can experience a Divine presence between you and others. Something magical happens when you are kind to strangers. You find you have a kindred heart with someone who is very different from you and someone who can give you no practical benefit in knowing them. It's like you connect to that person through God and you both get a jolt from knowing each other, even if it is short-lived. There are good books on this topic: *Why Good Things Happen to Good People* (Broadway Books, 2007) by Stephen Post, Ph.D. and Jill Neimark and *The Soul of the Indian* (Compass Circle, 2019) by Charles Alexander Ohiyesa Eastman.

Over time I have found that the more I dedicate myself to caring for others the more I find the Great Spirit residing there for me to receive Him. In fact, the Divine Presence is all over the place, more than I could ever have thought possible. Thank you for the privilege of sharing this time with me. I wish you well on your journey to seek God.

**John H. Driggs, LICSW, is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in private practice in St. Paul and co-author of *Intimacy Between Men* (Penguin Books, 1990). He can be reached at 651-699-4573.**

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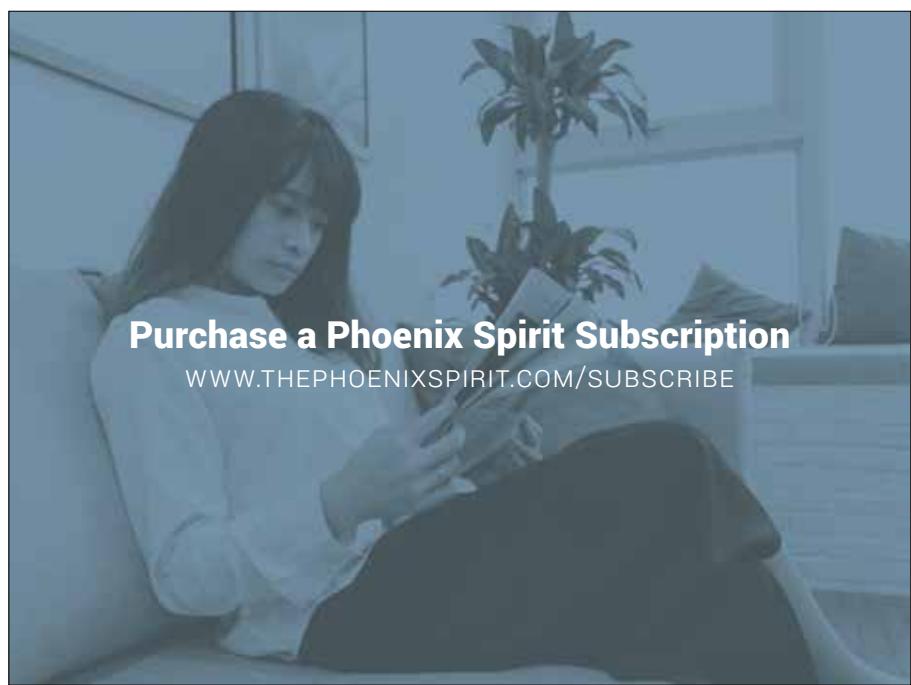
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# A Retreat for Grieving

by **Mary Lou Logsdon**

*"Give the sorrow words; the grief that does not speak knits up the o'er wrought heart and bids it break."* — WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, MACBETH

**E**ach year I look forward to writing a piece for our Retreat Issue. Often, I compose it on my way home from my annual retreat. However, this year I haven't made a retreat, rather I have sheltered at home for months on end.

One might think that this, of itself, would be a retreat. It hasn't been. It's been a year on edge. A year waiting for the latest numbers—on COVID-19 deaths, on vaccine distribution, on measures of loneliness, on business closures, on unemployment, on gun fatalities, on crowds of protestors, on school openings and closings. Waves of numbers.

It is easy to be swept away in the undertow of numbers. Each represents a loss felt by individuals, families, communities. There has been little space to grieve before hearing of the next casualty.

We need to pause to honor what is gone. We all need a retreat to grieve.

*What might that look like?*

First, we name our losses. Every September 11 people assemble to name the 2,977 people who died in the 2001 terror attacks. The Vietnam Memorial in Washington DC lists the individual names of all American military who died in combat during that protracted war. Communities gather to name victims of violence. Our retreat would begin by naming our losses. We would pause to remember those we lost in the 15 months since our world withdrew into isolation to stop the march of this pernicious virus. Some died from COVID-19, some from despair, some from violence. For others it was their time. We all lost the opportunity to fully grieve each passing.

While people are at the top of our loss list, we have also lost a host of less personal and less tangible things such as a sense of freedom, safety, innocence. We've lost face-to-face contact with neighbors, family, people in our weekly meetings. We've lost the routine gatherings in our home, our church, the public square. We've lost graduation parties, grandchildren sleepovers, family time at the lake. We've lost local restaurants, neighborhood salons, quaint curio shops.

*Let us name our losses.*

Secondly, we lament. To lament is to complain, wail, mourn aloud. We hold so much sorrow, individually and collectively. We await another tragedy, another change in direction, another person hurt or ill, or dead. Ecclesiastes reminds us that there is "a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance." It is time to weep.

It is hard for me to give my feelings the freedom to be loud, bold, and immediate. I prefer a controlled mask. *Who am I protecting?* I can take my sorrows to a Higher Power and really complain—be angry, hurt, and noisy. It isn't fair. It isn't good. It isn't right. *How can you do this to me?* *To us? Why must this be?* We express this pain in peaceful public protests. We gather to lament what has happened. We want people to know how sad and afraid and in pain we are.

In our retreat we can give our sorrow words. We can read poetry of lament. Scripture teacher Walter Brueggemann estimates that a third of the Psalms are prayers of lament. We can rant to our God. We can sit in our sorrow and simply be. We can weep.

*Let us lament.*

Thirdly, we celebrate what was. We do this with story and symbol. Mourners create spontaneous tributes at the scene of a violent death such as where George Floyd died, or at the deceased's home like at the gates of Buckingham Palace on the recent death of Prince Phillip, or at a meaning-making place such as on the steps of the Supreme Court for Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

As we consider our many losses, what might be a way to honor them? Beauty calls at these times. A cousin honored my mother-in-law's death with a bouquet of flowers each month for a year. A piece of artistic expression might be a way to weave together our losses. Perhaps a collage, a poem, a quilt. Amanda Gorman's lyrical poem at the Biden/Harris inauguration was both a tribute to what had been lost in the January 6 attack on the US Capitol as well as a way to move through the grief in the promise of a hopeful future.

How might we tell our stories at our grief retreat? Maybe we can write a letter to a deceased person on our list. We could share how lonely life is without them, a memory from our time together, an amends for past hurt. This doesn't just have to be for a deceased loved one. It could be for someone we have not been able to see during this isolation. I could write to a friend about how I miss having coffee together, remembering the last time we met and telling her I miss her.

I could remember with my children what school was like before this year of remote learning, what we liked and what we didn't. We could listen to their stories.

Our book group took a leave from gathering and each of us wrote about what life is like during this disorienting time. We shared those stories, laughing and crying. It isn't just COVID-19, it is also all the other life happenings—cancer diagnoses, family crises, lost jobs.

*Let us remember what was with symbol and story.*

Finally, we re-enter through ritual. We may not know what the future holds, but we do know that there is a future. Ritual moves us through our grief and mourning into a place of hope. We may mark the end of this retreat time with a simple prayer or poem or song. Perhaps it is creating an altar to hold the symbols, words of lament, named losses. Rituals often involve the four elements: Fire, water, earth, and air. I could burn my laments. I could wash the entry to my home with a basin of water symbolizing my tears. I could place a spring seedling in the earth, watching it grow into new life. I could set sail my hopes on the spring breezes. While my ritual is mine to design, I may invite a loved one to join me, entering together into this new beginning.

*Let us ritually re-enter.*

I will take time to have a retreat for grieving. The losses are too great to just sweep away. May we give ourselves and our loved ones permission to grieve. New life will follow.

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