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MINNESOTA STATE PARKS AND TRAILS

Explore a State Park to Enhance Your Outlook

by Angelo Gentile

The cold and dark days of winter are mostly in the rearview mirror these days. As we move into longer days and warmer temps, Linda Radimecky, an interpretive naturalist for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Parks and Trails, reminds us that spring and summer are especially great seasons to get outside and visit one of Minnesota's 64 state parks and nine state recreation areas.

"Our parks are for everyone," Radimecky told The Phoenix-Spirit in a recent interview. "There's a beauty and a peacefulness in a state park, a grounding that happens every time your foot hits the path. And, it's been proven that walking in a park lowers one's blood pressure."

Indeed, the U.S. National Park Service reports that medical studies have shown that a 30-minute visit to a park can improve heart health, circulation

and lower cholesterol, blood glucose and blood pressure.

Beyond these physical benefits, the Park Service reports that studies have also shown that walking or spending time in nature can improve mood and self-esteem. Frequent exposure to nature can reduce anxiety and depression, while promoting a sense of well-being and fulfillment. As a result, a visit to a state park just might enhance one's mental health, maybe even one's recovery..

The DNR's Radimecky is a firm believer in the physical and mental health benefits of hanging out in nature, a view that makes her passionate about her job as a naturalist, a role that she's had with the DNR for more than 30 years, serving at six different parks. She currently works at Afton State Park near Hastings.

EXPLORE A STATE PARK to pg 6



IN MEMORIAM

Melody Beattie (1948-2025)

Beattie forged a career path in the recovery world becoming a chemical dependency counselor. It was in that work, listening to the stories of wives of alcoholic men, that she noticed a repeated theme—the need to control a husband while assuming responsibility for his drinking. She recognized the compulsiveness of codependence in story after story including her own.

Read more on page 16

JOHN H. DRIGGS

Loving Those We Hate

"We have met the enemy and he is us." POGO, A COMIC STRIP CHARACTER

Is it possible to have compassion for someone we totally hate? Do we play no part in the relationship with our arrogant boss who regularly puts us down? Can we ever forgive a parent who has virtually changed the course of our life for the worse? Can someone with radically different religious convictions ever be our friend? These are some of the big questions that are hard to readily answer. Indeed some of us can barely get through our day without stewing over the obnoxious driver who cut us off in traffic let alone answer these big questions. We live in such polarized times that it only feels right to either love or hate. Not going to extremes may feel weak and defenseless. Yet aren't these the very questions, whether we hide from them or not, that need to be answered? Indeed, our personal growth and maturity depends on our being able to respond to them in complex ways. In fact, it takes greater courage to put love and hate together than to keep them apart.

WHY LOVE THOSE WHOME WE HATE?

Clearly there is no value in putting the rose-colored glasses on and smiling away our anguish to appear to love someone we hate. True compassion is not an act; it is the result of painful soul-searching honesty. When we look for the good in someone we spurn, we have to ask ourselves why we hate that person so much. Sometimes we detest a person because we don't want to see, after all is said and done, how much we are like them. Some aspect in them is intolerable in ourselves and hating another is easier to swallow than hating ourselves. We may hold contempt for another to distract ourselves from our own failings. Sometimes we don't want to see our part in another abusing us because we would rather play the helpless role and wait for someone else to make us safe. Other times we hold grudges toward people who have harmed us and write them off because we want to deny how much power they still have over us. Sometimes hard limits as to when and how we see a loved one are required for safety.

However, in general, to totally deny a loved one's presence inside ourselves through cutting them off only hurts ourself. As the sage said, "When you seek revenge, build two graves." Others of us hide from people who are different from us because we want to hold on to our oversimplified views of life and not examine our own complexity. Indeed, none of these awarenesses are

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

When All You Want is Somewhere to Call Home

by Sharon Chapman

"There is nothing like staying at home for real comfort."
 JANE AUSTEN (1775-1817), ENGLISH NOVELIST

In this edition of *The Phoenix Spirit*, we are celebrating the art of retreat and travel, yet nothing could be further from my heart and mind at the moment. That's because you don't quite realize the value of home – until you don't have one. Let me elaborate on my most recent experience.

I've read – somewhat nonchalantly, I admit – about people misplaced by fire, flood, hurricane, and other natural disasters in recent years, but until *you* actually lose your sense of home (either permanently or temporarily), you really won't "get it." I was once misplaced by flood in my home for four months and that was hard enough, even though I had a temporary place to stay. But my most recent skirmish with the loss of "sense of home" was quite different. That was because it was compounded by other factors.

Back in January, I sold my home of sixteen years, due to various reasons. Needless to say, it was a bittersweet decision, although the sale was quick and relatively painless (as far as real estate transactions can be). I thought I had a plan: Move into temporary accommodation for nine months, find a piece of land and build my own home. That was until it became apparent that what I was looking for was non-existent in the area where I wanted (or thought I wanted) to live. So, with just a few weeks left before I had to leave my old home, the pressure was on me to find a new home. I made an offer on two homes before I literally bought a house in ten days, with little room for regret, procrastination, or second guessing.

I was excited to buy a 1924 fixer upper in my price range (of which there were limited options for *anything*) that I thought I could live in until renovated. I got heat installed and the water heater fixed and moved in. But I had literally no

kitchen, and bathroom facilities were rudimentary compared to societal standards and, not before too long, I began to feel the stress. Fortunately, the contractor ended up starting work sooner than expected, but on the day of me moving out into temporary accommodation (on two days' notice) I was so sick that I could barely walk, and I had the biggest migraine of the century. Later that week, I ended up in the emergency room trying desperately to find relief for the never-ending pain – and also came away with an additional health diagnosis. I was told that my current circumstances simply weren't conducive to

You don't quite realize the value of home – until you don't have one

allowing my body to heal. Within a day, I managed to secure a long-term Airbnb rental to give myself a sense of place, a sense of security, and a place to heal while they worked on my new home.

As I write this, I should be moving back into my new home (complete with a new bathroom, kitchen, and the expected mod cons) in early June. But if there is one thing that this experience has taught me, it's that we all too often take our basic needs in life – and that place we call home – for granted, until it's no longer there. I can only imagine the enduring trauma that misplaced survivors of disaster and addiction feel when grappling with not only the loss of everything they've worked hard to attain, but that ultimate loss of the sense of home.

No matter how large or small, fancy or humble your home is, remember this: Going on a retreat and taking time for travel is fun, if not necessary, from time to time. But being able to come back home to that place *you* call home is invaluable.

To a place called home,

Sharon

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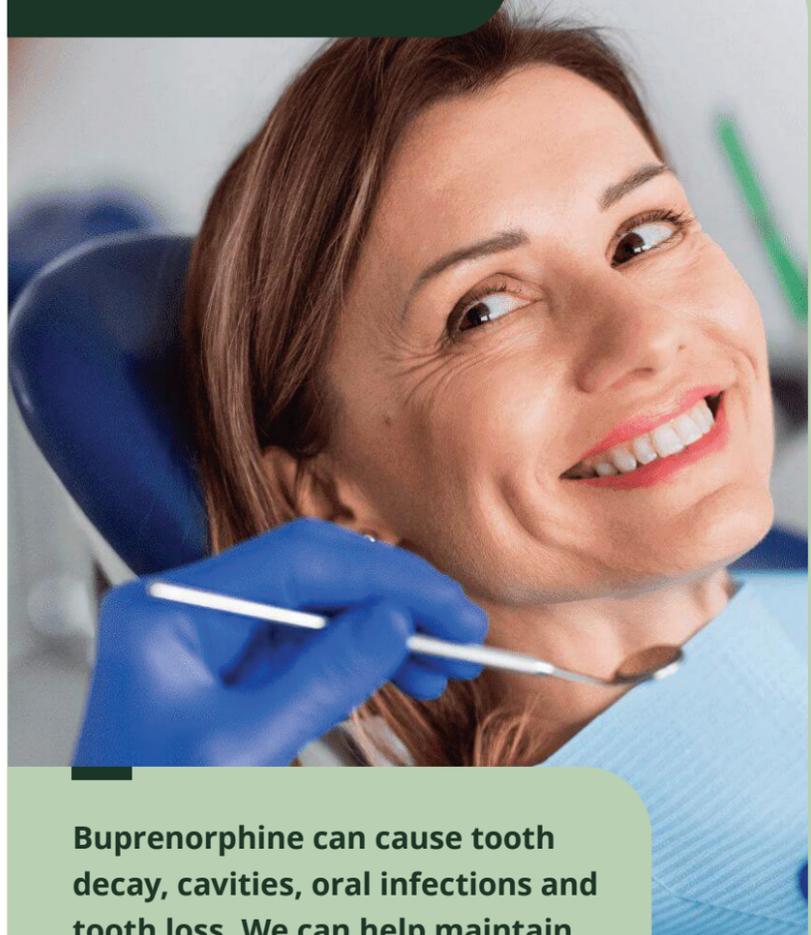
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Dr. Karl Anderson holds a Dental and Masters of Science degree from the University of Minnesota Dental school. He received training at UCLA in the early eighties in Branemark surgical training course, and he is a graduate of the Misch Institute. His specialty degree is in the field of periodontics. Dr. Anderson has placed and restored dental implants since 1985. He has been involved in the development of several implant products. He is a recovering alcoholic with long term sobriety who is passionate about helping others.

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SPOTLIGHT ON MENTAL HEALTH

Making a Podcast? Expect a Creative Crisis

by Seth Perry



The author / Photo illustration by Seth Perry

On May 16th, 2024, I sent an email to a production company with an idea about a podcast exploring mental health stigma in a diverse variety of faith communities. Twelve months later I completed a six part limited documentary series streaming on all platforms. Sometimes the creative process was life giving. However, I am a recovering addict with a diagnosis of bipolar type 1 and I was certainly my worst critic. This is the story of my creative journey in making the Our Stigma Podcast.

Imagine me, alone in an Airbnb in Pittsburgh, after a long day at a conference and after a chance meeting with a podcast producer. I neurotically and obsessively crafted these words late one night:

“Dear Mitch, Interestingly, prior to my trip to Pittsburgh, I developed a podcast pitch. This project was sparked by my recent feature on MPR’s Minnesota Now. After my interview, I noticed a surge in bookings for my faith and mental health workshops as well as speaking engagements. My recent work has struck a nerve.

I see a developing need for mental health education and dialogue in local faith communities. I would like to discuss the possibility of a limited six episode 22 minute documentary podcast

exploring the intersection of faith and mental health. The project would feature a variety of voices, identities, cultures, religions and experiences in the Twin Cities Metro. Please let me know if your team would consider receiving my pitch.”

I never expected them to say yes, but they did. To anyone out there in recovery— Whether from addiction, a mental health condition, or anything else that ails you: If you’re getting your feet back on the ground, shoot your shot at every chance you get.

Over the past two years, since going public with my mental health diagnosis as a pastor, I have sent numerous emails to news outlets, production companies, publishers, literary agents, magazines, and producers. An overwhelming number of these queries receive no response. Some get rejected. However, a slim minority end up getting a positive reply. I am proof that you should never give up.

Sometimes, I have to be careful for what I wish for. Addiction and mental health content creation is an extremely crowded market. The lived experience of mental health and addiction is all about telling your story. In my 15 years in recovery, I’ve heard a lot of stories. As more people gain confidence in recovering out loud, more podcasts, memoirs, blogs, and social media accounts are cre-

ated. This past year of creating has been plagued by self-doubt—wondering if I could actually make something original. Somehow, I overcame the barriers I put in front of myself.

I discovered a solution to my inner critic. Just start creating! I carefully crafted and planned the six episode summary and overview on paper. I researched community partners and organizations in the Twin Cities Metro. As I drove in my car I was constantly mulling over how I could tell the stories that were out there. I started listening to other content in the genre I was going to create. Any spare moment I had over the past twelve months was given to discerning how this podcast was going to come together. Finally, pieces of the script were formed on some Google docs that I shared with the producer.

The first day I recorded audio for this project was both a relief and a burden. “Great,” I thought, “Now I’ve recorded 2% of my podcast, and none of it is edited, mixed, or assembled in any way.”

Multiple times over the course of this year, I hit creative walls where I wanted to give up. A major creative crisis came when I listened to the first edited segment. I quickly listed a host of problems such as: I don’t like the sound of my own voice, no one will listen to this, I’m never going to finish and this whole thing is a waste of time. Little did I know, this was all part of the creative process—it just felt amplified by my mental health condition.

Overcoming the creative crises I faced in this project happened gradually—one small step at a time. Momentum was the main factor. Many folks that live with a mental health diagnosis, particularly folks like me who live with bipolar disorder, often struggle when they get caught in a loop of anxiety and procrastination. I cannot count how many times I hit a creative wall and retreated to the couch. Every single time I was stuck I found one way out of the rut. I did one thing. I completed one task. Pretty soon I had shaken off the rust and I was creating again.

Since October 2024, I have interviewed people in rural communities, African American communities, East African communities, Indigenous communities, and Hmong communities. Each person I spoke with shared their unique perspective on mental health and addiction recovery. We discussed and compared how cultural and religious stigma affected us within our respective backgrounds. All of these stories were then

Many folks that live with a mental health diagnosis, particularly folks like me who live with bipolar disorder, often struggle when they get caught in a loop of anxiety and procrastination.

carefully edited, compiled in one place, and released for Mental Health Awareness Month. It was a journey with many highs and lows—but it was worth it.

If you are in recovery, have a mental health diagnosis, are a trauma survivor, or are a caregiver, there will be times when your mind—or your circumstances—tell you that you’re not enough, or that you can’t create something new or ambitious. It is my hope that this article gives you hope that you can try new and ambitious things. Many people like us will hit the creative wall and not envision something on the other side. However, I am excited to tell you that many amazing things await you if you give it enough time.

The Our Stigma Podcast is streaming on all major platforms. Find all the links at ourstigma.com.

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

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ADULT CHILDREN OF ALCOHOLICS

Mom's Big Shoulders

by Dorothy P.

The other day I was chatting with my good friend Julie, the Julie I walk and pray with—I have many Julies in my life. I was explaining to her my shoulders are disproportionately large for my body. I apologized to her because my sizeable shoulders were atmospherically leaning over the table. Disagreeing, she said I was proportional; my body was just right. I was quite shocked. No one had disagreed with me about the bigness of my shoulders. Anticipating rejection, I habitually warned people.

During high school and college, my girlfriends and I complained about our bodies, gossiping and lamenting to each other about the way we were assembled. We talked hours on the phone, hours over pizza drinking Coke, hours into the wee of the night at pajama parties itemizing the deficiencies of our failed bodies. My fondest topic was my big shoulders and outsized arms.

Mom was the one who told me I resembled my dad's body. "He was six feet tall and built like a football player." I was five feet four inches and plump. Mr. Tordrup, my 4th grade science teacher, weighed each of us and I was the last kid he weighed. I was one pound heavier than Jack, the round, dark-haired boy who never got picked for sports teams. Heaviness looked like me. Mr. Tordrup scowled down at me, "Eighty-nine pounds." I was crestfallen.

Mom selected A-line dresses sized "Chubby," 14C or 16C for me. There really was clothing designed for chubby girls when I was a preteen. Mom critiqued my big legs and arms, my big build. Often, she would yell about the dime store cotton dresses I sewed and how hemming them slightly above the knee exposed too much of my fat legs. I longed to wear Twiggy miniskirts but settled, wearing chubby clothes and Kmart imitation clothing.

Around the house mom asked me to clean, seasonally washing the kitchen walls or weekly washing pipes under the bathroom sink. She was gone working and was tired, so I carried her heavy things, too.

My shoulders grew as mom grew sick. Eventually she became disabled. As she got still sicker, my shoulders grew bigger. Bigger so I could go alone to the laundromat and wash, dry, and fold all the family's dirty laundry with the owner's Great Dane for company. Bigger so I could be dropped off alone at the drug store to buy my personal items because it was my fault I had periods. Bigger so I could pull the weeds, mow the lawn, and paint the fence. Bigger so I could grocery shop for the family and worry about our next meal.

My shoulders grew bigger and bigger and bigger as I listened to her buy more and more life insurance policies with our limited money, becoming personal friends with the salesman at our small, rickety kitchen table. Our household was financed by her low wages and, during my teen years, by the scant Arizona welfare system. I was responsible to listen as her loud, high-pitched fears grew larger inside my head and terrified my young spirit. My shoulders grew even larger so I could shoulder her dramatic fears and frequent horrors of the sky falling onto our family. I became obsessed with parenting my parent.

1st Person

My shoulders grew exceedingly large as I became emotionally and mentally exhausted and rebelled against her chores and her tenuous decisions that brought darkness and oppression to our family, and darkness and oppression to me. I thought my shoulders would explode, and I guess they did, right out of my mouth.

Vehemently, they erupted right out of my mouth at her, my brothers and, inside my screaming brain, at myself for being a failed mother to my brothers, a failure as a teenager, and a failure at changing the circumstances of our family.

I was a failure at changing my body parts and my tumultuous and confused internal life. I screamed to try to change her and my brothers who didn't see anything wrong with the way we lived, who saw me as the problem, who saw me as the parent they hated. I was larger than life in our home, my shoulders filling the house trailer and the atmosphere outside the open windows.

I began yelling at her with all my might so she would stop telling me what to do and how she wanted things particularly done at home, at the store, at the laundromat, in the yard, and how I should live her life for her. I was the adult; couldn't she see that? Her life was a failure, and I was seeking a future, stability, quiet, and a hint of light.

My shoulders were like my father's, like a football player, large and broad and strong. They carried mom's world and mine. They carried my brothers' world, too, the household world parents shoulder. My shoulders twisted together and came up my throat and out of my mouth and made the atmosphere in our home distressing as I yelled and argued with mom and screamed at my brothers, demanding that they be different. They mocked me and called me a wounded water buffalo as I stomped through our mobile home with the tenuously structured floor that reverberated with my shock wave steps. I was loud and outrageous. My shoulders were not only big but loud.

I had mom's big shoulders; I was mom's big shoulders. And it wasn't until I was about fifty years old that my shoulders began to shrink back into my body. They withdrew from the open windows and the atmosphere around me. They retreated down into my throat and attached themselves to my neck. They squared up and fitted into average women's clothing. These are the shoulders Julie sees me with today. Maybe someday I will see myself as a well-proportioned woman. If I keep chatting with girlfriends over coffee about everyday life it just might happen.

Dorothy P. attends Adult Children of Alcoholics. Please send your 1st Person articles to phoenix@thephoenixspirit.com to be considered for a future issue.



The Phoenix Spirit

RECOVERY • RENEWAL • GROWTH

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Resource Directory

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To be included in the Resource Directory, reach out to David at ads@thephoenixspirit.com.

from page 1

NATURE AND OUR SENSES

Radimecky views the benefits of nature through what we experience with our senses. Case in point: Our sight.

“When you’re walking in a park or on a trail or other outside setting, you are able to just slow down,” Radimecky says. “As you slow down, you begin to notice and see more — the green trees, the blue water—and you notice that we are part of the earth, part of the environment. We are not on it, we are part of it.”

Another example: Our sense of hearing. Radimecky explains that you start noticing the soundscapes of nature: “As you slow down, you hear more—birds chirping, the wind in the trees, a rushing river.”

Further, Radimecky says, “Sounds are a wave ... it goes through our bodies, and sound waves can also help our healing, sound waves create space in our bodies so our bodies can heal, so when you are out in nature ... those sound waves are in there ... like the wind or the birds ... that’s why some people have wind chimes ... If you can slow down, you can experience how we are all connected. Everything is connected in nature and we are part of it, not separate from it. That’s healing in and of itself to know that you are a part of it.”

The sense of smell can come into play in nature, too, Radimecky says. “One of my favorite smells is just before a rain, the air pressure is lower and the smells, the aromatics, come out of the earth. It’s fresh smelling, so refreshing.”

Even the sense of touch can be used to experience nature. Trees, for example, have various kinds of bark—think of a birch tree’s bark compared to an oak’s bark. “And you can feel the differences in our park [trees] as you encounter the varied types of trees we have.”

STATE PARK OPTIONS ABOUND

Do some basic Googling about Minnesota state parks, and you’ll find plenty of information.

Afton State Park, for example, where Radimecky works, can be a great choice for metro area residents because it’s nearby, along the scenic St. Croix River. The park hosts plenty of trails for hikers, has a swimming beach, offers hike-in backpack campsites and includes a visitor center. Visitors also find plenty of wildlife to observe: Hawks, ducks, geese, a variety of migratory birds, deer, fox and



First page photo: Fort Snelling State Park / Photo by MN DNR. This page, top: Afton State Park overlook / Photo by Melanie Graves. Bottom left: Boundary Waters bald eagle / Photo by Steve Piragis. Bottom right: Canoeing at Fort Snelling State Park / Photo by MN DNR.

more. Afton also hosts an eagle’s nest in the park. Ironically, Radimecky says, the nest is right on a main trail to the beach. “Thousands of people walk that trail.”

Fort Snelling State Park is another nearby park to consider for metro area folks, located at the confluence of the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers. It’s actually quite near MSP Airport, just off Post Road and State Highway 5. As the DNR’s website states, this park offers a number of hiking, biking, snowshoeing and skiing trails that link to an extensive regional trail system. Visitors can also canoe, fish or swim on Snelling Lake.

If you are up for a road trip, a pop-

ular destination has always been Jay Cooke State Park, just outside Carlton, Minn., not far from Duluth. The terrain is rugged, part of a rocky gorge where the St. Louis River flows, eventually making its way to nearby Lake Superior. More adventurous visitors can bring their canoes and kayaks. The park’s iconic swinging suspension bridge high above the river is likely the most prominent feature of the park. Washed out several years ago during flooding, the bridge has been replaced. Jay Cooke State Park has also always been a great birding destination. According to the DNR’s website, the pileated woodpeck-

er, marsh hawk and the great blue heron are a few of nearly 200 species of birds that nest and feed in the park.

About forty-five minutes northeast of Duluth on the North Shore of Lake Superior, Gooseberry Falls State Park is another perennial favorite. The stunning waterfalls here are the main attraction of course: The Upper, Middle and Lower Falls of the Gooseberry River. Visitors find plenty of hiking, camping and picnicking options. The park also includes an exceptional view of Lake Superior.

These are only four of the state parks. The DNR has more information on all of the other parks that are located through-



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from page 6

There's a beauty and a peacefulness in a state park, a grounding that happens every time your foot hits the path. **And, it's been proven that walking in a park lowers one's blood pressure.** LINDA RADIMECKY, MN DNR



Left: Pike Island, Fort Snelling State Park / Photo by MN DNR. Right: Jay Cooke State Park / Photo by Explore Minnesota

out Minnesota on its website, or at Explore Minnesota.

COST? HOW ABOUT NO COST?

It should be noted that the DNR charges various fees for state park usage, such as yearly vehicle permits (\$35) or one-day passes (\$7), campsite fees, etc. But if you're on a tight budget, no worries. There are free ways to get into state parks and recreation areas.

First, on four days each year, all state parks and state recreation areas offer free admission to everyone, that is, no vehicle permits are needed. Two of those freebie days have already occurred for 2025, but two dates remain: Saturday, June 14, and Friday, November 28.

Second, the DNR works with public libraries across the state to provide free seven-day state park passes for checkout for library cardholders. *The Minnesota Star Tribune* recently reported that, currently, there are 175 passes distributed among about 100 libraries, and the DNR is planning to expand that amount to 500 passes. You can check the DNR's website for a list of participating libraries.

Finally, Radimecky offered one other notable piece of advice. When planning to get out into nature, don't settle for a rushed, 15-minute walk with ear buds blasting loud music or tuned to a podcast. Take out the ear buds. And leave all

of those "screens" behind, too—phone, computer, TV. Visit a state park. Slow down. Notice nature and be a part of it. Enjoy.

Angelo Gentile is a Minneapolis freelance journalist and former newspaper and magazine editor who has also worked in public relations and corporate communications.

Learn more

Minnesota DNR
www.dnr.state.mn.us/state_parks/index.html

Explore Minnesota
www.exploreminnesota.com/how-to-visit-minnesota-state-parks

Libraries participating in seven-day state park passes for checkout
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Those who struggle with mental illness are at an increased risk for gambling addiction.



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

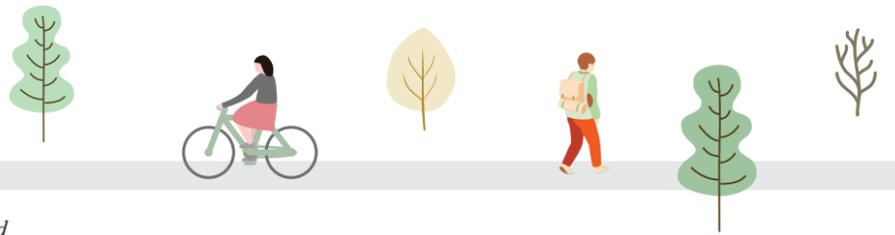
Telehealth services available. Seeing someone for problem gambling treatment is now easier than ever - from the comfort of your own home.

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



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

Retreat Directory



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

ARTS RETREATS

The Grand Marais Art Colony
Grand Marais, MN
218-387-2737
www.grandmaraisartcolony.org

Boundary Waters are to the north; Lake Superior is to the south. GMAC explores visual arts in that liminal space between. They exist to advance the aesthetic inquiries and experimentations of artists. GMAC is an artist-centered space offering residencies, classes, signature events, and exhibitions. GMAC is a welcoming community that supports risk-taking and self-discovery; and are an immersive gathering place where you can germinate and exchange ideas, inspirations and techniques.

Tofte Lake Center
Ely, MN
218-365-7769
www.toftelake.org

Tofte Lake Center (TLC) is a non-profit organization that provides residencies for artists who crave dedicated time to work on their projects, for creatives who seek individual growth through guided workshops or retreats, for arts organizations that want to make time to re/focus on their goals or mission, for arts leaders to gather to exchange ideas with colleagues in their field. TLC is on a pristine lake near Ely, Minnesota, and adjacent to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. Tofte Lake Center was established in 2008 by Liz Engelman and Michael Bigelow Dixon.

The Old School Artist Retreat Center
Lengby, MN
218-209-2051
www.oldschoolarts.org

A rural Minnesota retreat center in a restored 1906 schoolhouse. Private studio stays, hands-on classes, and intimate four-day retreats designed to help artists recharge, reconnect, and create.

FAMILIES COPING WITH AN ILL CHILD OR LOSS

Faith's Lodge / Child Loss Foundation
Danbury, WI
612-825-2073
www.childlossfoundation.org/faith-s-lodge

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. Faith's Lodge was established in 2007 by Mark and Susan Lacek after their daughter, Faith, was stillborn. They wanted to create a place where those coping with the death of a child could find the hope, strength and connection that wasn't there for them. Since opening in 2007, Faith's Lodge has served over 13,000 people from across the US.

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. Osprey Wilds is a private, non-profit 501(c)(3) residential environmental learning center and conference & retreat center nestled on the shores of Grindstone Lake in east-central Minnesota.

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

The Boundary Waters Canoe Area is in the northern third of the Superior National Forest in northeastern Minnesota. More than 1 million acres, it extends nearly 150 miles along the international boundary adjacent to Canada's Quetico Provincial Park and is bordered on the west by Voyageurs National Park.

SPIRITUAL / RECOVERY

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

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

Benedictine Center of St. Paul's Monastery
St. Paul, MN
651-777-7251
www.benedictinecenter.org

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 / St. Scholastica Monastery
Duluth, MN
218-723-6699
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.

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.

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

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

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

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

Minnesota Humanities Event Center
St. Paul, MN
651-772-4242
www.mnhum.org/event-center

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



www.waldheimresort.com

(320) 321-9096



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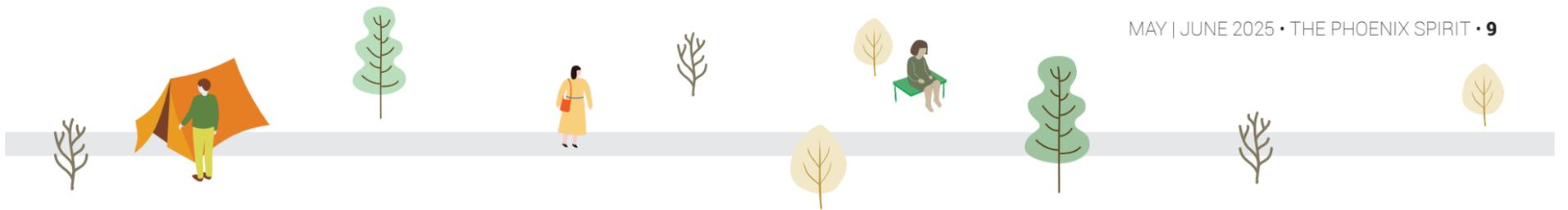
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SPIRITUAL / RECOVERY

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.

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 12 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.

STATE PARKS

Afton State Park

Hastings, MN
651-201-6780
shorturl.at/hqIMW

Grand oaks and delicate prairie flowers grace the rugged, rolling landscape of this park. Trails pass through remnant and restored prairies, wind down deep ravines, and rise up to the grassy ridgetops and bluffs overlooking the scenic St. Croix River. The trails are perfect for hikers, horseback riders and cross-country skiers. The park offers visitors a swimming beach, backpack campsites and a visitor center with interpretive displays.

Fort Snelling State Park

St. Paul, MN
612-279-3550
shorturl.at/xdtbo

Located in the heart of the Twin Cities, this park offers extensive hiking, bike, snowshoe, and ski trails that link to an extensive regional trail system. Canoe, fish, or swim on Snelling Lake, or hike on Pike Island where the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers meet. Interpretive exhibits at the Thomas C. Savage Visitor Center provide a good introduction to the history and resources of the park area. This is a day-use only park; no camping is available.

Jay Cooke State Park

Carlton, MN
218-673-7000
shorturl.at/5qAOH

Park trails connect to the Willard Munger State Trail on the north side of the park. Check out the wildflowers in the spring, and the vivid colors in the fall. Walk on the swinging suspension bridge high above the Saint Louis River. Visit the historic cemetery and the gorge at Thomson Dam. In some seasons, the water of the St. Louis River thunders over slabs of ancient, exposed rock. At other times, it slows to a gentle trickle. Visitors enjoy the scenic splendor of Jay Cooke State Park during all seasons.

STATE PARKS

Gooseberry Falls State Park

Two Harbors, MN
218-595-7100
shorturl.at/vPvRg

Gooseberry Falls is the gateway to the North Shore. It is known for its spectacular waterfalls, river gorge, Lake Superior shoreline, Civilian Conservation Corps log and stone structures, and north woods wildlife. Listen to the thunderous roar of the Upper, Middle and Lower Falls of the Gooseberry River as it plummets through a rocky gorge. Watch for waves, ships, or the moon rise on Lake Superior from an ancient lava flow known as the Picnic Flow.

Hike or ski to see the Fifth Falls through a forest of evergreens, aspen, and birch, and enjoy camping in modern campsites, picnicking, and relaxing along the Lake Superior shoreline or the Gooseberry River.

To get the most out of your visit, stop by the Joseph N. Alexander Visitor Center where you can find park information, interpretive displays, a park video, Nature Store, and more. Don't miss the Gateway Plaza for outdoor interpretive signs on area resources and history. The park is named after the magnificent set of falls along the Gooseberry River. With the rise of North Shore tourism in the 1920s, there was a concern that the highly scenic North Shore would be accessible only to the rich. As a result the Legislature authorized preservation of the area around Gooseberry Falls in 1933, and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) began to develop the park the following year.

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A PERSONAL REFLECTION ON ETHICS, GROWTH, AND HARD LESSONS

Refocus Recovery and the Complex Future of Peer Support in Minnesota

by *Tim Balow*

In 2019, Minnesota faced a mounting public health crisis. Substance use was rising, overdose deaths were climbing, and the state's treatment systems were overwhelmed. Traditional healthcare struggled to keep up. Amid this chaos, one solution began gaining momentum: Peer recovery support offering guidance and encouragement from people who had lived through addiction and found a way out.

Peer support offered something many systems couldn't: Empathy rooted in experience.

I joined Refocus Recovery in early 2023 with a clear mission—expand training and strengthen the peer workforce across the state. We launched an ambitious initiative offering free training to become a Certified Peer Recovery Specialist (CPRS). At the time, most other programs charged \$600 to \$900, making them inaccessible to many. Our free model sparked immediate demand, with new trainees signing up in droves.

To support these peers after training, Refocus Recovery partnered with Kyros Care, a tech-driven healthcare company focused on addiction recovery. Kyros Care helped manage hiring, placement, and supervision of certified peers. On paper, the partnership made sense. But as we soon discovered, the reality was far more complicated.

A PROMISING START

Throughout 2023, Refocus Recovery grew quickly. Trainees completed certification, gained confidence, and began working in the field. Watching people in recovery become professionals who helped others was deeply fulfilling.

Our training program evolved into a broader movement. We were building a statewide peer workforce, reaching underserved rural areas and supporting people often left behind by traditional systems. It was exciting, inspiring, and full of potential.

WARNING SIGNS

But by mid-2023, warning signs began to emerge.

At first, concerns about peer conduct seemed like isolated incidents. Then more concerns surfaced: Questionable billing practices, incomplete documentation, and services billed that weren't allowed under state policy. Kyros Care responded by investing in compliance tools and supervision. When misconduct was discovered, action was taken, up to and including termination.

Still, the problems persisted.

THE BREAKING POINT

In December 2023, everything changed. Media reports accused Refocus Recovery of being a "shell company" and alleged Medicaid fraud linked to Kyros Care. Even though we had already returned funds billed in error and tightened oversight, the damage was done. Our reputation unraveled almost overnight.

Peers were targeted with harassment and threats. Some opponents worked to discredit us and dismantle our work. Despite this, we pressed on—improving training, enforcing ethics, and continuing to offer our services at no cost.

But the scrutiny didn't fade. And the weight became too much.

THE END OF REFOCUS

By September 2024, the Minnesota Department of Human Services suspended our billing privileges. No detailed evidence. No due process. No transition period.

Hundreds of peer specialists lost their jobs. Thousands of clients lost support. But in the face of the crisis, Minnesota's recovery community responded. Other Recovery Community Organizations (RCOs) stepped in, absorbing displaced peers and clients, showing resilience even as Refocus Recovery fell.

Personally, the fallout was devastating. I faced harassment, threats—even stalking. Some peers in the field celebrated our collapse. That hurt. But worse was watching something we built with so much hope and purpose come to an end.

WHAT WE LEAVE BEHIND

And yet—I'm proud.

Refocus Recovery helped train thousands of peer specialists. We reached communities that desperately needed support. We helped people find purpose after addiction. We sparked legislative reforms that raised standards, clarified roles, and brought accountability into focus.

Even in its end, Refocus Recovery played a vital role in pushing Minnesota's recovery system forward.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

As of 2025, we still haven't been presented with evidence of fraud. We made the decision to close—not because we were found guilty, but because the storm around us was undermining the very cause we believed in.

It's easy to label us the villain. But that narrative misses a harder truth: Minnesota's peer recovery system was unprepared for the rapid expansion it underwent. The infrastructure, oversight, and policy just weren't there. We built the plane while flying it—and paid the price when things went wrong.

Let this serve as a call for collective reflection.

Accountability in recovery work must be universal. Not just for a few scapegoats, but for every actor in the system—training providers, service organizations, government agencies, and policymakers. If we tolerate toxicity, infighting, and selective enforcement, we fail the people we claim to serve.

Our work must be rooted in ethics, humility, and a shared commitment to healing. Peer recovery has the power to change lives—but only if the systems that

Peer recovery has the power to change lives—but only if the systems that support it are just, ethical, and resilient.

support it are just, ethical, and resilient.

The story of Refocus Recovery isn't just one failure or controversy. It's a lesson in ambition, consequence, and the cost of moving faster than the system could support.

And it's a reminder that the peer movement is bigger than any one organization. It always was.

Tim Balow has spent the past seven years working within the addiction and recovery system of care, bringing a broad range of experience across recovery community organizations, residential treatment settings, and large-scale training and consulting initiatives for local, state, and federal programs. Tim is driven by a deep commitment to unity, hope, and empathetic service in all aspects of his work.



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Valerie Gustafson
MPS, LADC

Valerie works as a Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor with Hennepin Health. The views expressed are hers and not her employer.

PEER RECOVERY COACH TO LADC

Chat With a Helper

Q Can you share a bit about yourself and your role at Hennepin Health?

I'm a person in long-term recovery (since 2008) who found out about Peer Recovery Coach training in 2017. After completion, I was invited to join the newly formed AmeriCorps program "Recovery Corps." My assigned site was Minnesota Recovery Connection (MRC), where I spent two years learning more about recovery than I had ever imagined existed and became an accidental graduate student. AmeriCorps programs pay living stipends and give educational awards, so I applied to a UM Masters in Addictions Counseling program thinking there was no way I'd be accepted but could show my kids that I'd tried and give them the money for their colleges. Instead, I got a letter saying "Welcome to graduate school."

I joined Hennepin Health last summer as part of a pilot substance use disorder (SUD) expansion to their Social Service Navigation Team. Back in 2017, I read an article about wrap-around SUD care that supported people's recovery in situ, and it inspired me to work in the addictions field. It was only available with one type of insurance out East and doesn't appear to have continued, but Hennepin Health is a Managed Care Organization that integrates traditional medical services, behavioral health services, and other county and community services that address the social influencers of health.

Q What inspired you to work as a Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor (LADC)?

Becoming immersed in the recovery community via MRC and seeing first-hand how the Certified Peer Recovery Specialists (CPRS) workforce struggled for acceptance and validation made me think that CPRS becoming LADCs would synergize and expand the behavioral health workforce, and that lived experience would commensurately help to reduce stigma. It seems like that's happening.

Q Can you share a bit about what you're seeing in counseling individuals with substance use disorder (SUD)?

Everyone's experience is different, but addiction has commonalities. Substance use generally starts out as enjoyable and/or helpful and becomes a disorder when people find that they can't stop or control use that's affecting them negatively. It's often rooted in trauma, and sometimes the trauma is caused by the substance itself becoming a burden that can't be put down. Stigma, the idea that addiction is a choice rather than an illness which no one would choose to have, holds people back from seeking help.

Q Are you seeing an increase in people seeking help with their addictions?

I think so. Along with increases in medical treatments available for SUD, there's a trend towards integrating SUD care into regular healthcare vs always having to go somewhere that will target a person as substance-affected before they are ready to identify as that.

Q What things are most helpful to someone dealing with a substance use disorder?

Everyone's experience is different but listening to people, *really listening* to hear them and not just to respond, is always a good place to start. Looking up "meeting people where they're at" gives a good description of where to begin.

Q How can someone help a person who is struggling with a substance use disorder?

Educate yourself on who and where to refer, what resources are available. There are Recovery Community Organizations (RCOs) all over the state who can help, and the easiest way to find them is through MARCO (The Minnesota Alliance of Recovery Community Organizations): Phone 612-888-9001.

Q Anything else you'd like to add about your work / any resources people can access while they are seeking recovery?

Contact an RCO and connect with peer support! When my mother died, I bought a little book called *Water Bugs and Dragonflies* (Doris Stickney; Pilgrim Press, 2009) for my children. It's meant for teaching children about death: The water bugs are happy together but whenever one of them leaves the water, the others don't know what happens to them. Then the story follows one who climbs and becomes a dragonfly up in the sunny world. Anyone who's in recovery knows how it feels to be a dragonfly, which is why peer support is so important—because we can go back in the water and show the water bugs what is possible.

Interested in chatting? Connect with us at phoenix@thephoenixspirit.com.

Learn more

Hennepin Health
www.hennepinhealth.org

Minnesota Recovery Connection
www.minnesotarecovery.org

MARCO
www.marcomn.org

Minnesota Recovery Corps
recoverycorps.us/minnesota

GAMBLING HOTLINE
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Driggs from page 1

Some of us are just too proud to heal. Which is another way of saying we are scared to be loved.

easy to swallow. They're terrifying! That's why we hate. On the other hand, were we to love those whom we hate, or even attempt to, we would reclaim dark aspects of ourselves and transform them. Such miracles are rare, precious and sometimes inscrutable.

HOW CAN WE FORGIVE SOMEONE WHO HAS HURT US?

Putting aside hatred for an enemy is no easy matter. It is a form of forgiveness. Some of us can only do so after our enemy has died. However some of us don't have to wait that long. A friend of mine once said, "There is no such thing as an enemy out there. The enemy is really the stranger in ourselves we haven't gotten to know." Forgiving an enemy means we are willing to fully repair the damage inside ourselves made by another and move on with our own lives. It means we are not allowing that person to have power over us any longer and live within us. We become totally responsible for our own safety and happiness. This is easier said than done and often can't be done alone, although the decision to forgive is an alone decision.

Some of us may simply require our religious faith to begin the healing process. Others often require a team of helpers—trusted friends, professional help, support groups, body workers, and some form of spiritual direction—to really be rid of our hatred. Typically we begin to forgive when safety is restored to our lives. When we know how to protect ourselves—knowing when to say "yes" and when to say "no"—and having the facility to do so is often the beginning of forgiveness. Forgiveness is a complex grieving process that separates us from our perpetrators. It is only through real separation that we can begin to accept togetherness with a loved one who has harmed us. Forgiveness at best is often bittersweet. The feelings we have towards another who has harmed us is never as good as the feelings we might have had were the harm to have never occurred. However the feelings we have towards ourselves for loving someone we hate is sublime and a profound passage to maturity.

WHAT STOPS US FROM LOVING SOMEONE WE HATE?

Sometimes we're unaware of our resentments toward a loved one. We may say we had the perfect childhood and were raised by exceptional parents. Yet today we may withdraw from and resent our own children for the demands they make on us in our lives as parents. We may claim to be over and moved on from an old lover who has done us wrong. Yet we are constantly comparing our new partner to our prior flame. Some of us

never transform hatred because it lives unconsciously inside us beyond our awareness. Others of us enjoy vilifying that boss in our life that won't give us a raise or that foreigner who can't speak English and is hard to understand.

Some of us simply want no responsibility for ourselves. Little do we know that if we even looked for another job or took that class on cultural diversity our boss would appear more likeable to us, and we would find something very much in common with a newcomer from another land and feel less alone. We may withhold love from people we dislike because we secretly see ourselves as undeserving and unworthy. The secret we keep from ourself is that the public image we portray is only a facade.

Finally, there are those of us who are too scared to bridge the gap of forgiveness. We may say, "Well I'm waiting for so-and-so to make the first move. After all I'm not the one who screwed up our relationship." Some of us hide behind the cloak of self-righteousness. What we are truly scared of is moving beyond our petty differences and actually enjoying a real emotional connection with someone we used to hate. Hate keeps an imbalance going; love evens things up and allows us to receive caring. Some of us look for excuses to hate. Even when there is abundant evidence for another doing wrong to us we find it unthinkable to "turn the other cheek" and walk up to our enemy and say, "Hi, I think it is time for us to mend some fences." Obviously not all fences can be mended but the mere act of approaching an enemy and seeing if some mending can occur is healing in itself. Some of us are just too proud to heal. Which is another way of saying we are scared to be loved.

Whether we're living in la-la land about our resentments, focusing on others as a distraction from ourselves, or hiding from love, we are all essentially staying with negative patterns because they are familiar to us. As Sheldon Kopp, a famous psychoanalyst, once said, "We prefer the security of known misery to the misery of unfamiliar insecurity." Loving someone we hate would risk losing our connection to misery and those who are miserable with us, as that is all we know.

STORY OF TRANSFORMATION

Needless to say, I don't believe in staying with the familiar or even with the comfortable. If we are not reinventing ourselves throughout our lives we are dying. Consider reading, *I Thought We Would Never Speak Again* by Laura Davis. Finally let me leave you with a story:

A man was having a very hard time forgiving his father. His dad nothing to do with him throughout his life and now

that his dad was dying the man was being asked to reconsider having a relationship with his dad. When he was young, his dad told him he didn't feel worthy enough to be his dad and felt his son was in better hands with being taken care of by his mother alone.

The man didn't know what to feel toward his dad. He didn't feel he had a dad. Initially when he got the call from his lost dad he wanted to hang up. He wondered what was in it for him to get together with this stranger who calls himself "dad." He was much more settled into hating his dad or at least ignoring him. The dad proposed they do a camping trip in the Rocky Mountains. It would be their last hurrah and a chance to heal. He said he wanted to see his son before he died. At first the man said, "No" thinking it better to let sleeping dogs lay. His dad said, "Be a man and let's face this together." So the man decided to meet his father for the first time simply out of bravado since he couldn't stand the thought of his dad being more of a man than he was. After all, he hadn't abandoned his kids like his dad had.

Their trip was inauspicious and uncomfortable. Except for one incident. Once as the father and son were climbing a steep slope that overlooked an amazing valley, the dad lost his grip and began to tumble down the slope to the very edge, which had a huge drop-off. The son ran down to help his dad who now was holding on for dear life with his hands on the edge of a precipice. There was no rope to keep the dad from falling. The son thought if he helped his dad he might not have the strength to lift him up and they might tumble together and perish in the deep canyon below. Time stood still. The man entertained thoughts of just letting his dad fall. After all he had never saved him and his dad was dying anyway. The moment of crisis came. His dad yelled out, "Son, go get help. I can hang on." The man realized that his dad was asking him to let him die as they both knew he couldn't hang on long enough. Something amazing happened. Suddenly the man decided to take all the pain and anger he had toward his dad and make a force out of it to rescue his dad. Immediately he lunged forward with amazing strength he never knew existed, held on for dear life and pulled his dad to safety on the awaiting mesa. Exhausted, they both wept tears of relief and forgiveness. Nothing needed to be said between them after that.

At his dad's funeral just weeks after this incident, the man realized that even one act of love can completely change life forever. That was all the love he ever needed.

John H. Driggs, is a retired Licensed Clinical Social Worker, living in St. Paul and co-author of Intimacy Between Men.

This article first appeared in a prior issue of *The Phoenix Spirit*.

John Driggs is taking a break from writing for a season due to health reasons. We hope to hear from him afresh in an upcoming issue.

When I focus on what's good today, I have a good day.

When I focus on what's bad, I have a bad day.

If I focus on the problem, the problem increases.

If I focus on the answer, the answer increases.

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

FROM THE STATE OF MINNESOTA

Federal Behavioral Health Cuts Jeopardize Lives of Minnesotans

by *Teresa Steinmetz*



The federal government's decision to rescind up to \$27.5 million in critical behavioral health funding from Minnesota is not just short-sighted — it's dangerous. This action threatens to dismantle essential mental health and substance use disorder services that thousands of Minnesotans rely on every day.

On March 25, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) notified DHS that several grants funded with federal COVID-19 dollars were abruptly terminated the prior day. Now, despite the continued need, SAMHSA is attempting to pull that money back. These actions have left community programs scrambling, and have put lives at risk.

These cuts will have real, human consequences. Minnesota stands to lose funding for youth mental health programs in schools, overdose prevention and response efforts, and services for pregnant women seeking recovery. In Greater Minnesota, mobile crisis units that have been a lifeline for rural families are now uncertain about their future. In the Twin Cities, funding cuts would reduce the availability of First Episode Psychosis services for individuals experiencing early serious mental illness. And across Minnesota, residents could lose access to Warmlines, in which peer specialists provide emotional support, connection, and resources to individuals experiencing mental health challenges before they escalate to crisis.

Some have argued this was "COVID-era" funding, and that the pandemic has ended. The behavioral health crisis unleashed by COVID-19, however, has not disappeared. It's deepened. In fact, youth mental health concerns have spiked since 2020, with ER visits for suicidal ideation among teens climbing significantly. Providers are still overwhelmed. Communities are still healing. To pull this support now is like taking away the life raft before we reach the shore.

What makes this even more troubling is the chaotic, inconsistent way these cuts have been rolled out. States were given little notice and even less

clarity. And now, significant staff time has been spent assessing the impact of these cuts, determining legal ramifications and communicating with partners. These actions do not achieve efficiency for taxpayers — instead, they threaten to waste previous investments and destabilize the entire behavioral health infrastructure that we've built since 2020.

These cuts are not occurring in a vacuum. They come at a time when the current administration is also proposing significant cuts to Medicaid, which would have disastrous effects for behavioral health care in Minnesota. Medicaid covers 20% of all mental health treatment in our state, and 50% of substance use disorder treatments.

Fortunately, there is some legal recourse in motion. Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison has joined a coalition of 23 states suing the federal government over this reckless decision. A federal judge has now granted a temporary restraining order, pausing these cuts for the time being.

In the meantime, Governor Tim Walz has launched a new federal funding disruption tracker to monitor and respond to these threats in real-time. This tool, announced last month, is designed to increase transparency and ensure that Minnesota leaders — and Minnesotans themselves — can stay informed about what's at risk. You can find this tool at mn.gov/mmb/budget/federal-investments/data-and-reporting/.

To our partners across the state: we see the uncertainty this creates for you, and we share your frustration. We promise to keep communicating clearly and promptly as this legal process unfolds. And most importantly, we will not stop advocating for the behavioral health services that save lives, support recovery, and strengthen Minnesota communities every day.

Our work continues — because every Minnesotan deserves access to the behavioral health care they need.

Teresa Steinmetz is the assistant commissioner of the Behavioral Health Administration at the Minnesota Department of Human Services.

CALENDAR

GOPHER STATE ROUNDUP / 50 YEARS

When: May 23-25
Where: Double Tree, Bloomington
Cost: \$30
Info: gopherstateroundup.org

An occasion to share the fellowship and to carry the message of AA; with Al-Anon and Alateen participation. This year's theme is "50 Years of Carrying the Message". Meetings, speakers, fellowship. Guaranteed special room rates are available, ask for the "Gopher State Rate."

MINNESOTA ADULT & TEEN CHALLENGE MINNEAPOLIS GALA

When: Friday, May 16 from 5-9pm
Where: Hilton Minneapolis
Cost: Varies
Info: www.mntc.org/event/gala

Hear stories of the miracles that are happening every day within our walls and help us to continue to restore families, strengthen communities, and transform lives

BETTER TOGETHER BARBECUE

When: Saturday, June 14 from 11:00am to 3:00pm.
Where: 499 Charles Ave, St. Paul
Info: marcomn.org/event/better-together-barbecue/

Music, food, speakers and kid friendly. Everyone is welcome. Brought to you by Anything Helps, Minnesota Recovery Connection, and the Peer Advisory Council.

TWIN LAKE ALANO CLUB ANNUAL GARAGE SALE

When: Saturday, June 7 from 8:00am to 3:00pm
Where: Twin Lake Alano, 4938 Brooklyn Blvd, Brooklyn Center
Cost: Free
Info: aaminneapolis.org/event/twin-lake-alano-annual-garage-sale/

Join us for the fun and fellowship and maybe even "pick-up" a few things. Donations accepted. Lunch will be available from 11:00am to 1:00pm.

MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH



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With funding provided by the Minnesota Department of Human Services Opioid Epidemic Response Advisory Council (OERAC), Minnesota Certified Peer Recovery Specialists are encouraged to complete our annual Workforce Survey.

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Scan to take the Survey today

SUPPORT GROUPS

MONDAYS

1900 Mens Al-anon, Monday 5:45-7:15pm, 12-Step meeting, step presentation and small groups, fellowship. 1900 Nicollet Ave., Plymouth Congregational Church. Tom W., 612-281-5230. Enter at parking lot.

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

Overeaters Anonymous: Monday mornings, 10-11am. 3rd floor, handicapped accessible. Minnehaha United Methodist Church, 3701 50th St Mpls 55407. For more info call Ana 651-592-7510

Online Gamers Anonymous and Olganon: Mondays at 6:30 at the Cavalier Club, 7179 Washington Ave. South, Edina. Cavalier Club is located on the corner of Valley View and HWY 169.. Plenty of free parking! If video games or other excessive tech use is making your life unmanageable or if someone you care about is gaming excessively, we'd love to meet you. More info on this emerging 12 Step Movement at www.olganon.org

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

Friends and Families of Suicide: a place of support and comfort where those that have lost a loved one to suicide will be comfortable talking about their own loss as well as hearing about the losses of others. Meets the 3rd Monday of every month 7-9pm, Twin Cities Friends Meeting, 1725 Grand Ave., St Paul, 55105. For info email ffosmn@yahoo.com or call Tracy at 651-587-8006.

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

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

TUESDAYS

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

Families Anonymous (FA): First and third Tuesday evening of each month, 7pm. Support group for families and friends of those dealing with drug, alcohol or other behavioral issues. Is someone you love destroying family harmony by using drugs or alcohol? Free help exists! Join us at St. Timothy Lutheran Church: 1465 N. Victoria Street, St. Paul, MN 55117, or contact Dave E: 612-701-5575.

Recovery International Meeting at Mary Mother of the Church, 3333 Cliff Road, Burnsville, rm 9 at 3pm. It is a proven self help method to deal with mental illness including depression, anxiety, anger, mood disorders and fears using cognitive behavior therapy. Contact Rita at 952-890-7623.

Emotions Anonymous: For those dealing with emotional stress, depression, etc. 7:30pm at Christ the King Lutheran Church, Room 106, 8600 Fremont Ave., Bloomington. Take Penn Ave. south to 86th. Turn left and go to Fremont, just east of 35W. Brian at 952-888-6029.

Nicotine Anonymous: No Tuesday or Saturday in-person meetings yet. More details: www.nicotine-anonymous.org.

Overeaters Anonymous Roseville: Meetings are held from 10-11am (and Saturday's from 8-9) at St. Christopher's Episcopal Church, 2300 N. Hamline

Ave., Roseville, Room 218 Call Janie 651-639-4246 for more info.

A.C.A., 5:30-7 pm, Dakota Alano House, 3920 Rahn Rd, Eagan (Hwy 13 & Cedarvale Shop Ctr). 651-452-2921.www.dasinc.org/

A.C.A. 7pm, Saint Michael's Lutheran Church 1660 W City Rd B (at Fry). Roseville. Open to all. Step and Traditions meeting.

Get a Fresh Start! 12-Step AA group, open meeting Tues., 7pm, at Kingswill Church, 1264 109th Ave NE, Blaine. Denny, 763-757-6512.

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

WEDNESDAYS

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

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

Overeaters Anonymous: St. Paul Midway: Wednesdays 7-8 PM, Hamline United Methodist Church. Two blocks east of Snelling & Minnehaha. Park in south parking lot, use south entrance to education building. Press buzzer. For more info contact Susan at 651-295-7854.

Adult Children of Alcoholics: Wednesdays @ 7-8:30pm. St. Mary's Episcopal Church, 1895 Laurel Ave, St. Paul. Meets downstairs, sign in the lobby. For more information call Mary at 612-747-0709 or Tom 651-894-3523.

Transitions: 7:30 to 9:30pm Support to men and women who are transitioning from incarceration to living in the community. Trained facilitators and peers provide emotional support in a safe, openly honest environment to discuss discouragements, frustrations, temptations. One of the trained facilitators is a woman. The Men's Center, 3249 Hennepin Ave. S. Minneapolis, 612-822-5892. TCM.org

Women's CoDA Group: Women's Only Codependents Anonymous Group. Meets every Wednesday at noon at Colonial Church of Edina, 6200 Colonial Way (Fireside room, S. end of bldg). For more information, call Valerie at 612.741.5281

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

Marijuana Anonymous, Bloomington, 6-7pm, Minnesota Valley Unitarian Universalist Church 10715 Zenith Ave S. (2 Blocks south of Old Shakopee Rd, on the East side of Zenith) Contact: bloomingtonma@hotmail.com

THURSDAYS

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

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

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

Workaholics Anonymous: 12 step group for finding balance between work, activity and fun. Meets every Thur. 6-7:15 pm. We are currently meeting by Zoom. Contact us for link at Email: wafindingbalance@gmail.com.

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

New CoDa East Metro Group: Rasmussen College, 8565 Eagle Point Circle N, Lake Elmo (exit north to Radio Dr. on I-94 E). 6:30-7:30pm. Joseph H. at 715-497-6227 or LaTosia 651-319-2554.

Recovery International Meeting, St Phillip Lutheran Church, 6180 Highway 65 N, Fridley at 7pm. It is a proven self help method to deal with mental illness including depression, anxiety, anger, mood disorders and fears using cognitive behavior therapy. Ken, 763-571-5199.

Recovery International Meeting at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 4100 Lyndale Ave S, Mpls at 7pm. It is a proven self help method to deal with mental illness including depression, anxiety, anger, mood disorders and fears using cognitive behavior therapy. Ruth 612-825-4779.

Adults with ADHD Support Groups: (first time free) Every Thursday morning 10am-noon and every Thursday evening (except last Thurs of the month) 7pm 8:30pm. LDA Minnesota, 6100 Golden Valley Road, Golden Valley, MN 55422. Tel. 952-582-6000 or www.ldaminnesota.org.

FRIDAYS

Food Addicts Anonymous: a 12-step program dedicated to food addiction. Fridays 8-9pm, Living Table United Church of Christ, 3805 E 40th St., Mpls, 55406. LGBT friendly. For more info call Shea at 612-722-5064 or sheahnsn@gmail.com or www.foodaddictsanonymous.org.

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

Recovering Couples Anonymous: Friday Night @ Minnehaha United Methodist Church, 3701 E 50th St, Mpls, 55417, 6:30 - 8pm. 12-Step couples group meets as couples in recovery from any addiction. The only requirement is the desire to remain committed to each other, and find better ways to communicate and develop intimacy. Call Kathy 612-545-6200 or Allan 612-309-5632.

SATURDAYS

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

Spenders Anonymous: Our purpose is to stop spending compulsively and work toward serenity in our relationship with money. 1-2 pm at Bethany Lutheran Church, 2511 East Franklin Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 55406; street parking or in the church lot; enter through the gate on Franklin and ring the bell; www.spenders.org

Northeast Minneapolis CoDependents Anonymous (CoDA) Group: East Side Neighborhood Services, 1700 2nd Street NE, Mpls, 55413 (corner of 2nd Street NE & 17th Ave NE). Park in lot behind building, use rear entry door. Saturdays: 1-2pm. Contact Ralph W. at rwink@aol.com or 612-382-0674.

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

Overeaters Anonymous Courage to Change Meeting: Saturday mornings 8-9am at St Christopher's Episcopal Church, 2300 Hamline Ave N. Roseville. Contact Donna with questions at 651-633-3144.

Clutterers Anonymous: St. Christopher's Episcopal Church, 2300 N. Hamline Ave., (Hwy 36) room 220, Roseville. 12 step support group meets the first, third and fifth Sat. of the month, 10-11:15am. www.clutterersanonymous.org.

Debtors Anonymous: Offers hope for people whose use of unsecured debt causes problems and suffering. See www.debtorsanonymous.org or www.danorthernplains.org to find a meeting online, in

person or hybrid (both online and in person).

Overeaters Anonymous: 8-9 am, Falcon Heights Community Church, 1795 Holton Street, Falcon Heights. Lisa 651-428-3484.

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder Support Group: 1st and 3rd Sat. of the month, 11am -1pm at Faith Mennonite Church, 2720 E. 22nd St, Minneapolis. Website: tinyurl.com/tcocdsg. Call before coming for direction. Burt at 612-547-6388.

Adult Children of Alcoholics & Dysfunctional Families: Saturday at 10 a.m., St. Philip's Lutheran Church, 6180 Highway 65 NE, Fridley MN 55432-5106 (Enter at Door 3). Please see www.acafriday.com for info.

Men's & Women's Support Group: Meetings every Saturday (including holidays) at 9am. Prince of Peace Church, 7217 W. Broadway, Brooklyn Park. (north entrance.) Informal, safe place to share experiences of joy and concerns. We promote growth & positive change to meet the challenges of our lives. Call 763-443-4290.

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

SUNDAYS

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

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

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

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

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

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

Opiates Anonymous: Sunday Evenings at 7 pm at Unity of the Valley Spiritual Center, 4011 West Hwy 13, Savage, MN. OA is the first 12-step-based group in the state of Minnesota offering help and support for anyone with a desire to stop using opiates and all other mind altering substances. If you think that you may have a problem with opiates or other mind altering substances, attending one of our meetings may help you decide if you are an addict. If you want to tap into help and support from people and a program with proven success, this is the place for you. No sign up or registration is needed. Just show up at 7 pm on Sunday evenings. If questions contact Ron at 952-657-9119

ABOUT THE LISTINGS

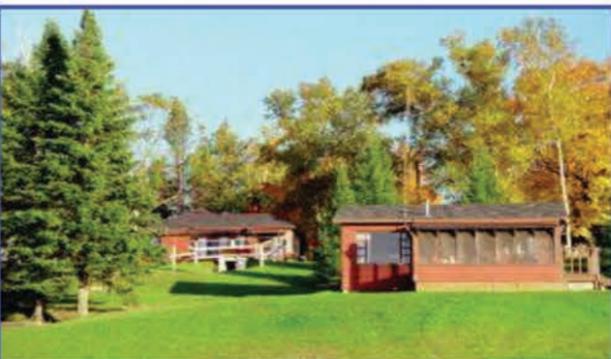
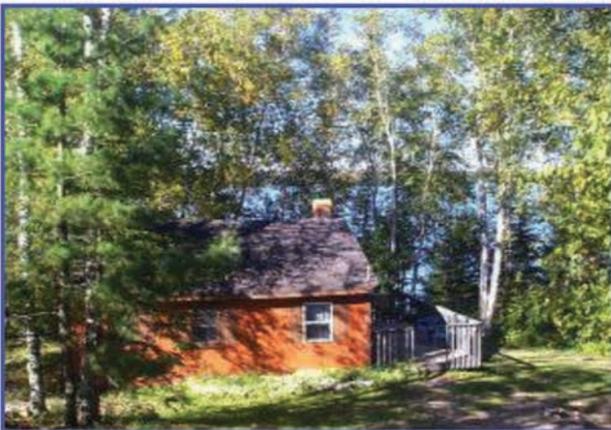
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Melody Beattie (1948–2025)

by *Mary Lou Logsdon*

“Letting go of our ideas about how life should go is a choice that sets life’s magic free.”

— MELODY BEATTIE

Melody Beattie, the woman who brought the term codependency into normal conversation, died on February 27, 2025, at the age of 76. Her story is grounded in Minnesota. She was born in Ramsey, went to Minnehaha Academy, and graduated from Harding High School. She wrote her first book living in Stillwater.

She escaped her dysfunctional home into alcohol and drugs, beginning at the age of 12. After being caught trying to crawl into a roof top vent of a pharmacy in Mora, she was court ordered into treatment. She found sobriety at 26.

Beattie forged a career path in the recovery world becoming a chemical dependency counselor. It was in that work, listening to the stories of wives of alcoholic men, that she noticed a repeated theme—the need to control a husband while assuming responsibility for his drinking. She recognized the compulsiveness of codependence in story after story including her own. Married to an active alcoholic Beattie followed the same pattern attempting to enforce his sobriety.

The existing literature on codependency was limited. She saw the need for a book that helped people recognize the compulsions as well as address how to manage it. No publishers were interested until the Hazelden Foundation agreed to publish and gave her a \$500 advance. She and her

two children lived on that and welfare for four months while she finished the book.

Codependent No More was a hit from the beginning. Her book differed from the usual writings on the topic; it centered on personal stories rather than psychological jargon. These were stories of real people for real people. She admitted later that some of those heart wrenching anonymous stories were her own.

Her most recent update to *Codependent No More* was in 2022. It has sold over seven million copies since its original publication in 1986.

As I reread this classic, I see how timeless it remains. We continue to create and support codependents. I still wrestle with my own codependency, twenty years after my first Alanon meeting. I appreciate her succinct definition: “A codependent person is one who has let another person’s behavior affect him or her, and who is obsessed with controlling that person’s behavior.” She also says, “A codependent is someone who loves someone else more than she does herself.” I think of codependency as a behavior I move into periodically rather than a perpetual state of being. I believe many of us can relate to recurring slips into an obsession of caring for others when they are quite capable of caring for themselves.

Codependency does not require that the other person be an alcoholic. We can be codependent with people who are mental-

ly or physically ill, immature, narcissistic, or in other ways happy to have someone else be their outside manager. Codependency is not to be confused with appropriate caring for people who cannot care for themselves such as young children, people with limited capacity, and people in times of crisis. Codependency steps in when we feel compelled to help a person solve their problem, even if they don’t see that they have a problem.

Here are a few of the codependence characteristics Beattie offers:

- Think and feel responsible for other people’s feelings, thoughts, actions, choices, wants, needs, well-being, and ultimate destiny
- Feel anxiety, pity, and guilt when other people have a problem
- Anticipate other people’s needs
- Try to please others instead of themselves
- Find themselves attracted to needy people
- Feel angry, victimized, unappreciated, and used
- Blame themselves for everything
- Lose sleep over problems or other people’s behavior
- Have a lot of “shoulds”
- Center their lives around other people
- Worry other people will leave them
- Feel controlled by others’ anger
- Find it difficult to have fun and be spontaneous

Melody gives us suggestions for how to deal with the scourge of codependency. The first step is detachment. “Detachment is based on the premises that each person is responsible for him (or her) self, that we can’t solve problems that aren’t ours to solve, and that worrying doesn’t help... detaching does not mean we don’t care. It means we learn to love, care, and be

involved without going crazy.” Here we again pull out our trusty serenity prayer and ask for the wisdom to know what is ours to change and what isn’t.

It is easier to be detached when I live in the present moment. I let go of the past with its regrets and refuse to fear the future. I let each day be its own. She asks us, “If you did not have that person or problem in your life, what would you be doing with your life that is different from what you are doing now? How would you be feeling and behaving?” Good question. I would sleep better, have fun, laugh aloud. We don’t have to sacrifice our joy for someone else’s problems or behaviors or choices.

When we are under the illusion that we can control someone else we are being controlled by that person and their behavior. When our self-esteem is tied up with someone else’s choices, we gaslight ourselves, refusing to see things as they really are.

Here are some things that we can do on our journey out of codependency:

- Learn to say no
- Recognize my own anger, listen to it, address it
- Notice when I am reacting and pause to choose my response
- Replace the word *should* with *could*
- Set boundaries
- Ask myself, “Is this my job or is it someone else’s?”
- Watch for my victim story and leave it behind

We are socialized to take care of others over ourselves. We must learn to care for ourselves as well. I am grateful for Melody Beattie’s wisdom and experience. Seven million books later, the journey continues.

Mary Lou Logsdon can be reached at logsdon.marylou@gmail.com.

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