

Ask the Expert

Michaelene Colestock of ANEW Chemical Health discusses women with children in recovery / pg. 10

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Artisan Gifts for the Season

Support small businesses who provide gifts for those in recovery / pg. 8/9

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November
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HOLIDAY ISSUE

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WHAT'S INSIDE

Letter From the Editor / 3

First Person Testimony / 4

From the State of MN / 5

Gift Guide / 8-9

Ask the Expert / 10-11

Books / 13

Support Groups / 14

In Gratitude / 16



What does it take for people living on the streets to find a place to call home? The prevailing model in government and social service agencies for addressing homelessness is a “housing first” approach. Get the person out of the elements and into a safe space to live, and then you can address their many other needs such as employment and addiction treatment.

Gabrielle Crowdus, a University of Minnesota researcher on homelessness, offers a different model, which she describes as “community first.” She says that people living in a state of chronic homelessness typically end up without a place of their own to live because “they have experienced the profound and catastrophic loss of family, and that’s led to the profound and catastrophic loss of community.” Most have lived through a lifetime of severely harsh experiences leading to substance abuse, mental illness, and crime. Everyone who cared about them has given up on them, and they live amidst constant danger and rejection on the streets. Not only are they without a home, says Crowdus, they are considered outcasts, belonging nowhere.

CREATE THE EXPERIENCE OF HOME

Therefore, she says, “To see someone become home-full, or no longer homeless, they need the experience of home, and home is a place of belonging. It’s a place where you’re known, you’re wanted, you’re loved. It’s a place where you have control. It’s a place where you can grow roots. It’s a place where you can grow your own memories and relationships and trust people and be trusted.”

As evidence, Crowdus points to research studies showing that many people served by the housing first model are

likely to end up homeless again within a few years. Crowdus became inspired by a program called Community First! Village in Austin, Texas, which has embraced over 500 people in need of housing with the full experience of home – tiny, sustainable houses to live in, purposeful work, and a built-in community of people that together address the most basic of human needs, including a place to belong.

Crowdus is bringing that same home-oriented model to the Twin Cities with a twist. Small settlements of tiny homes are being erected on property surrounding churches. These settlements are being organized by a non-profit, co-founded by Crowdus, called Settled.

The first of these Sacred Settlements, as they are called, consists of six moveable tiny homes, each one just a few hundred square feet in size. It is currently situated on a demonstration site at Woodland Hills Church in Maplewood, but two other Twin Cities churches are planning to implement this model on their own land in the very near future.

MORE THAN AFFORDABLE HOUSING

These dwellings offer much more than “affordable housing.” Each house is equipped with basic furniture and supplies plus insulation, heating, a sink, and large water holder. Restrooms with showers, water refill options, kitchen, and other common spaces are available for their use in the church building. But like the Austin-based model, which has 10,000 volunteers a year participating in its tiny home village, the local settlement will be engaging a host of people from participating churches and surrounding communities to be good neighbors to the renters.

HOMES TO THE HOMELESS to pg 6

JOHN H. DRIGGS, LICSW

When Someone You Know Is Living the Me-Me Life

He who falls in love with himself will have no rivals.

— BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

Please pardon me for talking about a very grim topic—the epidemic of narcissism in our culture. I’m doing this to give hope, validation and power to the partners of self-centered people and for all of us to work on this major health issue—narcissism—together. Hope is very much alive with such efforts. You likely know someone who is exceedingly self-centered and oblivious to the needs of others. About one in ten people have major chronic problems with self-centeredness and qualify for a clinical diagnosis of narcissistic personality disorder (NPD). You might say, “Is that all?” You may know many people who chronically only think and talk about themselves, exude charm, crave admiration, lack empathy, see themselves as special, are very thin-skinned, rarely ask anything about you, tend to know all the answers, and appear highly successful. You may even mistakenly admire people like this and wish you were as successful as they are.

You would be in good company because for the last fifty years America has been in the grip of another epidemic—the Narcissism Epidemic. Social scientists believe it worsened in the 1970’s and has only magnified since that time. In my mind it is the worst of all plagues—a sickness of the soul—and many of us can’t even see that it is happening. A number of us either brush aside the thought that we ourselves have this disorder or else idealize people who think they are special and often worship them. Being selfish and exaggerating our accomplishments almost seems like a requirement for success these days. In fact, it is a disaster (and a fate worse than death).

*Oh oh, yes I'm the great pretender
Pretending that I'm doing well
My need is such I pretend too much
I'm lonely but no one can tell*

— THE PLATTERS (1956)

PRACTICAL EXAMPLES OF NARCISSISTS IN EVERY DAY LIFE

Actually, the number of self-centered people is probably much greater than one in ten. Many are quite successful in business (at least in the short run), are quite reluctant

LIVING THE ME-ME LIFE to pg 12



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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

The Secret of Happiness

by Louise Elowen



*"The secret of happiness is not found in seeking more,
but in developing the capacity to enjoy less"*
SOCRATES, GREEK PHILOSOPHER

We are approaching the traditional time of year when we give gratitude for what we have in our lives. Given the last couple of years, you might be forgiven for thinking, "What *do* I have to be grateful for? How can I be *happy* as the pandemic continues to rage?"

In a chaotic, consumer-driven, unpredictable world of our times, it seems that in order to be "happy" we always have to make it about *me*: *How much do I have? How can you guarantee that I will be happy? Don't let other's misfortunate affect me...*

When I made the huge move across oceans to the United States fifteen years ago, I literally just brought clothes, books, photos, and a few mementos of home. I took a huge leap of faith to find "happiness" on another continent. Unfortunately, that "happiness" did not work out the way I had hoped. But during that brief period of my life when I made that move, made that leap, I felt *freer* than I had ever felt before. I wasn't burdened with much of what consumerism markets as "necessary" to be happy. I went through a lot of turmoil, but I believe I'm back on that path to my own version of "happiness" again. How?

Make a list of just five things that you *need* to live in this moment right now. *What do you have?* My list contains food, shelter, clothing, water, and a garden (for my mental and physical health). This might look different for you, but I am sure it comes down to some sort of variation of my list. If it doesn't, you might want to ask yourself, "Are you truly happy in your "now" moment?" Or could you unburden some stuff – physically and mentally? Would this make you happier?

The "secret to happiness" is your own journey to create. Don't let someone else dictate that for you.

To close: Do you have a roof over your head tonight, food in your belly, water on your lips, a blanket keeping you warm, and space to keep you healthy mentally?

The rest is just icing on the cake. And not all cakes need icing to be a tiny slice of heaven.

With gratitude for reading,

Louise



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seed in every issue.*

The Phoenix Spirit is a bi-monthly publication for people actively working on their physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being. We are committed to providing articles, advertising, and information about recovery, renewal, and personal growth to help people experience life in a balanced, meaningful way.

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Tips to help you during the Holiday Season

- ✓ Get Enough Sleep
- ✓ Don't Take On Too Much
- ✓ Don't Isolate Yourself
- ✓ Perform A Random Act Of Kindness
- ✓ Everything In Moderation



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Click

by **Tina D.**

My first calls for help weren't loud enough – given the deserted condo grounds three stories below. No tracks in the snow. Not even a bird or squirrel in the oak trees outside the screen. The sun was low, showing streaks on the sliding glass door that had closed with a solid, unmistakable click. I was locked on the screen porch in stocking feet with my cell phone inside and out of reach.

Cleaning the glass was meant to be a 5-minute task. There were smudges I'd missed last time I was housesitting. But the latch was loose, and the force of the door bumping shut flipped the lock to the closed position. After 10 minutes tugging the handle, it was getting too cold to solve the problem myself.

I grabbed a small, wool lap robe from the back of a wicker chair, wrapped it around my shoulders, and considered the options.

"Hellooo?" I called. "Can anyone hear?"

Then I pounded a shared wall with the next-door neighbor, and hoped I could minimize any drama. My situation was embarrassing. What sane person feels the need to wash windows during a Minnesota winter?

It had always been important for me to do a job right. As a child, I felt my failures keenly. Washing every dish perfectly or returning from the store with all the items on a list were, at times, impossible tasks that I could not complete to my mother's satisfaction – no matter how hard I tried. The streaks in the glass were like that. I hadn't cleaned it right the first time, and it needed to be perfect.

Now I was stuck, and my compulsion would be known. I spent a few desperate moments trying to jimmy the lock using a thin, metal frame from a decorative, wall thermometer. It was just above freezing.

And it didn't work. It only scratched the brass lock plate and broke the mercury piping – adding weight to my growing sense of failure.

So, the calls of "Hello?" turned to louder cries for "Help!" The sun had set but I tried not to panic as I wondered who could possibly hear me in a retirement condo complex shut tight against the cold. How cold would I need to be before slashing the screen to climb through and drop to the snow?

I wasn't that desperate yet, but my cries had grown to shouts and my hand was swollen from pounding when I heard a voice below.

"Where are you?"

A human! A resident two floors down had heard my distress. He apologized that he thought it was "Just kids yelling" until his wife insisted "Someone's in trouble." He wanted to call my folks, but I explained they were on vacation. There was still hope I could fix my mistake without their knowing.

He left to call the manager's office.

It must have been nearly 5 p.m. but if the staff was still onsite, they would have a passkey. Only now I couldn't remember if I'd also locked the dead bolt. I could



see the front door from my 3-season prison but not the position of the lock. And when a shadow crossed the crack of light along the frame – the door didn't open. I had thrown the dead bolt as feared, and a few minutes later, the neighbor called up that the staff couldn't reach me. He would have to phone the police.

My feet were truly numb by then but it didn't seem like a 911 event, and I suggested the nonemergency number. I was worried the police may consider the address a problem residence, because my folks had an officer visit some time earlier over a conflict complicated by too much wine and a senior moment. Local cops know when someone drinks. What if they thought I was the same person who had called to complain before? And who may, in fact, have been the problem?

The nonemergency line seemed appropriate – though it meant a longer wait. After several minutes more, I regretted minimizing the danger.

"Do the police know I'm trapped outside?" I called. "And not just locked out of a house somewhere?"

Maybe they imagined me waiting in a car or kindly neighbor's kitchen.

"They're aware of the situation," he replied, and after too long of a period for calm, a new shadow finally crossed the light around the front door.

It shimmied on first impact, then the wood frame splintered, and the door slammed open to reveal the silhouette of young, uniformed officer. He strode through the living room and released the broken lock that had trapped me in the dark and cold.

It's awkward getting rescued.

I was grateful to be warm and free and expected to see the police. What I hadn't imagined (and could not hear from the porch) was the group of neighbors and staff that had gathered in the hall.

There's a moment in rescue stories when a trapped child emerges from an abandoned well, or a rockpile falls away to cast a light of hope inside a cave-in, and the faces of people who care confront the survivor who thought that they were alone. My minor emergency seemed undeserving of their efforts; good people who made time to help me, and waited until the end when they knew I was safe. In that moment, a sense of my value almost replaced the feeling of dread for when my folks returned. I was still embarrassed, but I could deal with the damage, and felt that I was not alone.

Please send your 1st Person story to phoenix@thephoenixspirit.com. We will respond if there is interest in publishing it in a future issue. Thank you.

**It's
awkward
getting
rescued.**

*One day you will thank yourself
for never giving up.*

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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, email shira@livingproofmn.com or call 612-207-8720.

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Workaholics Anonymous Meeting

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

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

FROM THE STATE OF MINNESOTA

This Holiday Season, Remember Help Is Just a Call (or Text) Away

by Paul Fleissner



For many, the holiday season is a time of cheer, generosity and bonding with family. For some, it's a series of triggers that can threaten their recovery and mental health.

A recent study by the National Alliance on Mental Illness showed that for 64% of people with mental illness, the holidays make their conditions worse. It's not hard to see why – especially for those who are battling substance use disorder. The holidays present an abundance of parties where alcohol is prevalent. Family get-togethers can be stressful, given the dynamics of some families affected by substance abuse. And some don't have family to get together with at all, leading to feelings of isolation and depression.

The good news is that help is available. People experiencing a mental health crisis in Minnesota always have a person to talk to – during the holidays and all year around:

- You can text "MN" to 741741, and very quickly, a trained counselor will text you back and connect you to local resources, such as your local mobile crisis team.
- You can call **CRISIS (274747) from a cell phone, which will route you to your local mobile crisis team.
- If you only have access to a landline, you can find your local crisis team's phone number by visiting mn.gov/dhs/people-we-serve/adults/health-care/mental-health/resources/crisis-contacts.jsp.

There are 34 mobile crisis teams that cover all 87 counties in the state of Minnesota, including four that are tribal-specific crisis teams. The teams consist of mental health professionals who provide psychiatric services to individuals within their own homes and at other community sites outside the traditional clinical setting. Mobile crisis services provide a rapid response and individual assessment, resolve crisis situations, and link individuals to needed services.

No matter the level of help that you need, services are available here in Minnesota.

Mobile crisis services are available across the state 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Research shows these services are effective at diverting people in crisis from psychiatric hospitalization and are better than hospitalization at linking people in crisis to outpatient services.

Next year, crisis services are going to get even more accessible. On July 16, 2022, a new national suicide prevention hotline will launch: 988. Minnesota is preparing for implementation of this new national crisis response system, which will offer an alternative to 911 and connect callers with local resources. This new system is expected to increase the demand for services, and Minnesota is currently working to enhance its capacity to respond to people in crisis.

But we also understand that not every mental health issue is an emergency. Sometimes you just need someone to listen. The Peer Support Connection MN Warmline, offered by Wellness in the Woods and funded by the Minnesota Department of Human Services, has a team of peer specialists who provide a safe, anonymous space to talk. You can reach the Warmline between 5 p.m. and 9 a.m. by calling 1-844-739-6369.

No matter the level of help that you need, services are available here in Minnesota. You will always have someone to talk to.

Paul Fleissner, is the Director of the Behavioral Health Division at the Minnesota Department of Human Services.



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from page 1

For starters, two of the six houses will be occupied by people called missionals — individuals or families feeling a call to “love thy neighbor” in a very personal way. The other four homes will house people who have a long history of homelessness. These individuals, now living on the streets, are already well-known by the organizers of this project. They will have permanent homes for a small rental fee and be welcomed into a wider community. They also have the opportunity to work off part of their rent by cleaning the showers, helping with repairs, or doing other projects that support community life.

The settlement has no case workers or other agency services and requirements typical of programs serving people who are homeless. Renters living there will have full control of their activities and time. While having the privacy, dignity, and safety of managing their own homes and lives, they will also be invited to take part in community activities such as a Friday night movie watching party or a knitting group. They will be not pressured into attending religious events, though they may be invited. Their tiny home becomes their private, permanent place of residence.

BEFRIEND YOUR NEIGHBOR

Says, Crowdus, “We have a team of what we call advocate befrienders who we train to walk alongside people like a family member.” They are not there to fix or monitor anyone, but rather “to augment that role of family and community that the chronically homeless have lost.” They might offer to go along to a medical appointment or to a court appearance to clear traffic ticket backlogs. They might assist with complex paperwork that can be daunting for people dealing with mental health, literacy, or language barriers.

“People just fall through the cracks all the time in the system, and so we put this advocate befriender team around people to help them navigate through those things,” says Crowdus. The help is offered without pressure or expectation. “The person that’s coming off the streets is the leader. It’s always about: What are their personal goals?”

The first Twin Cities settlement is only waiting for final approvals from city government to welcome the first residents. Because the homes are on wheels and will be located on church land that



Photos from Settled (Cover, top left and middle bottom photos by John Swee of Dodge Creative Photography)

is already paid for, the project organizers have been able to bypass building codes and tax-related limitations, keeping costs far below what traditional affordable housing developments entail. The cost of each home is about \$40,000.

Crowdus hopes that many faith communities will adopt this program on their own properties. She says, “The world’s sacred texts all say to care for the poor in the same way that you care for yourself, not just with giving them a snack pack, but with your whole heart, with your life, with your relationship.” She also points out that there are huge savings to society when chronically homeless people are no longer cycling through emergency rooms, detox centers, and jails.

HOME FREE FROM ADDICTION

Avivo, a Minnesota organization working to end homelessness, provides a robust menu of housing options and services to support a stable, safe, sober life. Lindsey Pearson, an Avivo client, started drinking when she was 16. By age 24, she was heavily into meth and sought treatment for the first time. After five more rounds of treatment, a cycle of abusive relationships, sleeping in cars and backyard tents, getting hooked on heroin, and frequent jail time, she became ready to make big changes in her life in the fall of 2020. She found both an apartment and the treatment that finally got her life turned around at Avivo.

“The counselors were amazing,” she

says. “It wasn’t easy. I had to change everything, starting with my mindset.” Pearson also had to give up her using friends. “That’s what kept me stuck,” she says. But she was determined to get her life in order. Now, she says, “I actually have stability. I can wake up and have a schedule. I know what’s going to happen today. I’m safe and sober.” She says emphatically, “I’m not going back to prison.”

Pearson found a place of belonging at Avivo, with the support of staff. Pearson says she was especially grateful that her daughter could spend time with her, something not allowed during Pearson’s prior stays in treatment and prison. She is working now and looking for a permanent home for herself.





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from page 6



PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AT THE READY

In recent months, Avivo has created its own tiny home community, offering another way of serving people like Linda. Avivo’s 100 tiny homes are set up, side by side, within a large warehouse-like space just north of downtown Minneapolis. Like the occupants of Sacred Settlements, individuals in Avivo’s program have their own private, furnished house and a door they can lock to keep safe. Unlike the Sacred Settlements, Avivo’s tiny home community is heavily staffed by professionals who offer a wide array of personal and group support in a more formalized structure. The tiny homes are meant to be temporary, yet considerable effort is made to prepare people to live in permanent housing when they are ready. Avivo’s professionally staffed tiny home model is believed to be the first of its kind in the nation.

The people living there, as those in Sacred Settlements, are not required to give up their substance abuse or enter treatment. Rather, by Avivo’s offering them housing plus an array of mental health assistance, employment help, and other supportive services, says Charles Morgan, Avivo’s Vice President of Recovery Services, “We’re saving lives or working towards saving lives, so that if people eventually want treatment, at least they’re alive to make that decision.” If Avivo clients do decide they’re ready to quit using, access to treatment is readily available through Morgan’s program.

But that may not happen for a long time. Morgan points out that someone with a bipolar disorder or a psychotic disorder like schizophrenia may have difficulty being in any kind of relationship,



preferring to be alone. “It makes it hard for them to get into treatment,” he says.

ESTABLISH STABILITY AND TRUST

“The first thing is creating a safe environment for people to be able to recover from all of the injury to the brain — the changes in chemical makeup,” says Morgan. “You can’t expect the person who’s been out there using for five years to come in and think clearly enough to make major decisions about their lives.” With histories that may include severe abuse, horrific living conditions, major psychiatric disorders, and untreated illnesses, the clients need comprehensive care to get stabilized and gain trust in those who can help them.

Says Morgan, “One of the things that we are really striving to do is use the housing that Avivo offers optimally, in such a way that we have the highest level and standards of care for those that we serve.” Morgan, previously the CEO of Union Gospel Mission in St. Paul, brings plenty of expertise to his position, having also had considerable success working among the most resistant of clients in gang-run, drug-infested neighborhoods in Los Angeles.

He asks this set-up question: “When you have people who are very difficult to form relationships with who don’t want relationships, how can you get them into treatment?” His answer: “With the right teams, I’ve seen a true tremendous recovery of mental illness, but the services have to be integrated, and I think it has to be a team approach.”

It also requires highly skilled, committed, and resilient staff. “The way I did it,” he says, “is I kept reminding myself that there’s a human being somewhere in there, and it’s my responsibility to do the best I can to get in there and find him or her. If it was me, I would want somebody to be persistent enough to want to help me, to endure whatever I’m giving them that might discourage them until they could pull me out of there and get me to be who I ought to be.”

Tiny homes, whether in church parking lots surrounded by caring neighbors or in professionally staffed home settings like Avivo’s, are giving more people a chance to achieve that outcome.

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

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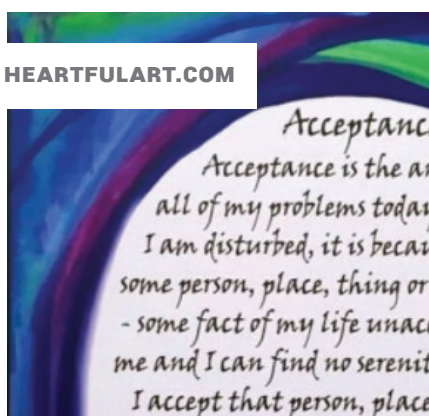
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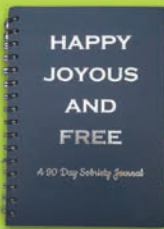


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Michaelene Colestock, LPCC, LADC

is the founder of ANEW Chemical Health Services and Spence Specialties LLC. Michaelene has been working in the SUD Treatment and Recovery field since 2001. After completing her Master's level internship at Wayside House she found she had a genuine passion for serving women and children. Michaelene's vision included providing sober housing to women and women with children, outpatient treatment services, and in 2021 included residential treatment services.

Q What are some of the specific struggles that women have related to substance use disorder (SUD)? In particular, women who are pregnant and/or have children?

Women encounter many barriers and struggles due to their SUD. The main struggle is obtaining treatment and finding housing for their SUD. Women are the primary caregivers for their children. Most women can't just say, "I need someone to watch my kids for 30, 60, or 90 days while I go away to residential treatment." Subsequently, outpatient treatment is often 9 months or more. During those times women are expected to manage their recovery, participate in all requirements they may be obligated to for child protection or probation, obtain employment or education, and obtain childcare for their children while they are doing all of their required tasks. Most women, at least the ones we serve at ANEW, are low socio-economic status. Therefore, they have to try and navigate very complicated systems to obtain housing support, food support, cash or general assistance to help with basic needs, and childcare financial assistance. These processes can take more than 60 days with the help of our staff who understand the processes. Women who are trying to obtain assistance on their own often give up because it is so cumbersome. If they cannot get housing and childcare, they cannot attend treatment, go to school, or obtain employment. Housing is another struggle that women encounter when they are working on their recovery. ANEW and Spence Specialties (the housing component of our program) are the ONLY programs in the state of Minnesota that allow children to live with their mothers in housing that is supported by the county in which they live. This program is called Housing Supports (previously called Group Residential Hous-

WOMEN IN RECOVERY WHO HAVE CHILDREN

Ask the Expert

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

ing). There are limited beds available in each county that support room and board for residents. There is other housing programs available for single women and single men. Some are supported by Housing Supports, but many are self-pay homes in which rent is very expensive. However, even those programs are few and far between. There are countless housing and treatment programs for men with SUD, but not for women. Most likely that is because women have children and children take up space. Sober and supportive housing programs operate financially by the number of residents they can serve and when children come into the picture, they take up valuable space that could be occupied by single women. A home that could house 10 single adult women will only be able to house 5 adult women if they have their minor children living with them. Most programs need the revenue of as many residents as possible. Other programs are also fearful of the "liability" that they think may, and probably is, involved in housing children. Programs worry about what they will do if mothers return to use or are not properly caring for their children. So, for the sake of fear, liability, and space, they do not serve women with children.

Q What are the additional risks, stressors, and/or traumas for children when their mother has a substance use disorder (SUD)?

The major, and most feared risk is that the mother will return to using and/or abusing substances. If a woman struggles with a substance use disorder (SUD) and she returns to use and has the child in her care, then we urgently need to find someone, or somewhere, safe to place the child/ren. We do have several options. Many/most of the clients in our program have an open child protection case plan. If the mother has a return to use, we always contact the child protection worker first. From there, we have to make several decisions. We have to assess how much the mom used, how often the mom was/is using, if the child is at risk of neglect due to the mom's use, and if she needs a higher level of care to be able to stop using. Sometimes, moms have a one-time return to use and then they are able to stop again, and the children are able to remain in their care. However, if the mom continues to use actively, we have to have child protection, or another family member, remove the child from the care of the mother so she can go and get the help she needs.

Q How is the family system served when women can enter treatment and have their children with them in sober housing?

ANEW works with a family education nonprofit program called The Family Hub.

They offer family therapy and education to the entire family of the woman who is seeking treatment. This is a free service for the client and her family. We are also able to refer the mom and her children out for ongoing therapy services through local mental health clinics. Our most common referrals are to a clinic called Art Lab Rx. This is a program that does art therapy with the mother and the children as a way to open lines of communication and facilitate better engagement for the children. We have another collaboration with a program called MN Care Partners. They offer therapy and mental health services to women and their children. They also provide on-site parenting classes, therapeutic yoga, and nutrition classes for our clients. We also refer to Ellie Family Services.

The most impressive way that the family system is served is in the parenting practices that occur in our sober homes between mothers. Hilary Clinton once said, "It takes a village to raise a child." We actually get to see this concept in action in our program. Our sober houses are single family homes. Each home has 5-10 bedrooms. Each mother gets her own bedroom where she and her minor children reside. However, the rest of the house is open to all residents and their children. Clients and their kids share kitchens, bathrooms, and living spaces. The women in the home help each other out and essentially become a working and cohesive

large family structure. All the mothers are able to care for not only their children, but the other children in the home including disciplining, teaching, feeding, redirecting, and guiding the children and each other. Moms help teach other moms and their children parenting skills. They often cook meals together and the children are raised like siblings. Many of the families live together for more than 9 months and up to 2 years in a home together. We have had several moms move out with each other into market rate rent apartments because they have become so productive at working together as a family unit that they want to continue on in that fashion when they exit our program.

Q What are some important activities that can support family restoration and healing for women and their children during the holiday season?

The holiday season can be a particularly difficult time for our residents. The holidays often remind our women of their own childhoods that may have been traumatic. Society suggests that the holidays are a wonderful time and for many families that do not struggle with addiction, trauma, and abuse the holidays are truly magical. However, when a woman is be-

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ing told that holidays are a time of joy, but that has not been her personal experience she can feel confused and disheartened. In an effort to make the holidays special for her own children, women who struggle with addiction often overcompensate. Our women tend to purchase gifts and items that they genuinely cannot afford out of guilt and shame that they have not been able to provide for their children in years past. They may not have even seen their children when they were in their active addiction during previous holidays. As mentioned before, the women in our program are of low socio-economic status. They do not have the financial means to provide the gifts for their children that they would like to. This can cause them to turn to alternative ways to get money to support the holiday season. Sometimes this means reconnecting with old abusers who have supported them financially in the past or returning to illegal activities to provide for their families during the holiday season.

At Spence Specialties and ANEW we want to remove the desire for women to overcompensate beyond their means. We want to help them make the holidays spectacular for them and their children. We do 2 large events during the holiday season. For Thanksgiving we do a "Gratitude Feast." The Wednesday before Thanksgiving we have a big potluck at our treatment center. All the women and their children are invited to attend. Each sober house is required to prepare one or more dishes to share with all the other homes. Spence Specialties and ANEW provide the main dishes for the event. This includes turkeys, hams, refresh-

ments, dishware, and the space for the event. Before we eat, we stand in a circle, hold hands, go around the circle and each client, child, and staff identify one thing that they are grateful for. After we eat, we have crafts and a holiday movie. Clients and their kids are welcome to stay as long as they like for fellowship. It is truly a day that fills us all with joy and gratitude.

Christmas is our biggest event of the year. As mentioned, we want to make our women and their children feel special, loved, and important during this part of the holiday season. We want them to know that "Santa" has not forgotten about them. We have each woman create a wish list. On this list she identifies 3 items she would like for herself and 3 items she would like for each of her children. We ask people on our social media sites and former donors to "adopt" our families. Donors can adopt a single woman, a woman and her children, an entire sober house, or donors can purchase items for everyone. On top of getting the items on the clients' wish list we also provide for each mother a new towel, a new pillow, a new pair of slippers, a new fuzzy/cozy blanket, a hat/gloves/scarf set. After all the clients and their children have been adopted, we have a huge Christmas party with everyone including all of our staff. We have a wonderful meal catered by The Little Oven, located about one mile from our location. We rent out a large hall, share our meal, let the kids run around, sing songs, and then Santa Claus comes and delivers all the gifts that have been donated. Each woman and her child can take a picture with Santa when their

name is called, and they all open their gifts at the party. It is truly a sight to see! Last year we gave gifts to approximately 50 women and at least 40 children. This year, we have even more women and children as our program grows and grows year after year.

Previous donors include friends of the staff of ANEW, former colleagues of staff, former clients that have now been sober for many years, and many businesses in the local community.

If any of your readers are interested in donating, they can send an email to christmas.ssaneu@gmail.com.

Q How can the recovery community support women and children on their healing journey?

Minnesota is the "land of 10,000 lakes" and "the land of 10,000 treatment centers!" Luckily, there are many resources in the state for people working on recovery and healing. The best resource available is Minnesota Recovery Connection (MRC). They are a local non-profit organization that has thousands of resources. Here, women and anyone in recovery can obtain information about treatment centers, sober housing, how to access resources, sober fun events, self-help meetings, recovery coaching support, volunteer opportunities, and the list goes on.

Here is a link to their website:

minnesotarecovery.org

The best thing community members can do to help support women is to be-

come educated about addiction and mental illness. There is still so much stigma associated with people who suffer from the disease of addiction. People do not want to be addicted to chemicals. Most people who become addicted start out just as innocently as anyone else who experiments with drugs or alcohol in their teen years. It is very socially acceptable, until a person crosses the line from use to abuse and dependence. People who end up "addicted" have a genetic predisposition toward substance dependence or something traumatic has happened in their lives and substances are a source of relief. We need people to stop saying, "What is wrong with the women?" (who have a SUD) and instead ask, "What happened to her to cause her to become addicted?"

Q What are some resources available?

- Psychologytoday.org
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
- Minnesota Recovery Connection
- Recovery.org
- Intergroup (AA and NA)
- minnesotanorth-al-anon.org

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

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from page 1

to admit they have any flaws, and avoid asking for help. They are the “great pretenders” of life. They are the exquisite con-artists of life. They even fool themselves into believing how truly great they are. Unfortunately, in our culture where image is everything, it’s not that hard to hide the void of our true emptiness from others. This is especially true when selfishness itself is portrayed as a virtue in our culture and your reputation is made on how well you can sing, how much money you have, and what kind of car you drive. In a superficial culture it’s easy to hide our emptiness. I always liked that T-shirt that read “Nuclear War! But what about my career!”

Although I do not advocate labeling other people as narcissists since it is not our place to judge and we often do so inaccurately, I do believe it’s wise to see narcissism in action in order to protect ourselves against it. This might (but not necessarily) include the following examples:

- Protestors who feel entitled to break into and loot family stores or block freeways in response to racial injustice.
- An uncle who refuses to get vaccinated and wants to meet in family gatherings because he thinks it’s his right alone to decide if he gets the shot.
- Renters who refuse to look for work even when jobs are available and expect the government to pay to keep their landlords from foreclosing.
- Schools that tell their students they are special and shouldn’t have to study to get good grades.
- Parents who blame the teachers even when their children act up and disrupt learning for others in school.
- College students who see it as their right to cheat on tests and then later brag about their grades.
- A man who controls and abuses his girlfriend and later kills her when she tries to leave him.

These ne’er-do-wells are enabled by a culture that sees their behaviors as part of the normal growing pains of life and basically harmless. Unfortunately, such attitudes only encourage misbehavior, ignore the suffering of people who are harmed by these behaviors, and also reinforces the belief that none of us are responsible for our behaviors. It is a grave disservice to troublemakers themselves who are not learning from consequences and later pos-

sibly turning into selfish monsters who wreak major havoc on society.

WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE A NARCISSIST?

You might think that people who constantly see themselves as superior to others would deep down have a massive insecurity. Actually, just the opposite is true. They don’t see themselves as condescending or dismissive but just supremely gifted, even when there is no evidence to support that view. They have two selves—an outward false self and an inward true self, whom they detest. They live in a two-dimensional world and do not see beyond their image when they’re looking into a mirror. They actually lack an identity and cannot describe themselves in a realistic way. They are very surprised and offended when others see their obvious flaws. They spend their whole life managing and manipulating their image and they get very little out of personal relationships. When the truth is shown to them, they disparage and demean the person showing them who they really are. Their primary existence is in a fantasy world of their own self-promotion. They do not see themselves as flawed even when concrete evidence is shown to them. They are exquisite manipulators and self-promoters who can’t help themselves. Their nearest animal relative is the king cobra, whose deadly poison can kill in 11 minutes. They hypnotize you into worshipping them and terrify you with their icy stare. They are predatory—they need to suck on others simply to exist. In human development they resemble the 2–3-year-old who cannot separate from its mother and demands to be the center of attention. Most of us can tolerate the selfishness of infants and teenagers who are normatively narcissistic, but we have a much harder time with older people acting like babies. You are at best an object to be used if you are around a narcissist, much like a parent is in the first few years of life of their infant. If this pattern continues with a narcissist, you will likely lose your identity, feel demeaned and sometimes lose your life.

WHAT CAUSES PEOPLE TO BE NARCISSISTS?

If you know the answer to this question, please let me know immediately. We can make millions of dollars curing the world of a great scourge. In my experience there are four factors that increase pathological narcissism:

In a superficial culture it’s easy to hide our emptiness.

1. Social context that over praises people for looking good and pretending to be great as opposed to being good and actually accomplishing beneficial goals.
2. Parents who either coddle their two-year olds, set no limits with their behavior and ingenuously over praise their children for the most minor of accomplishments.
3. Social media pressures that replace parents and cultivate stardom and specialness and distrust in relationships with others.
4. Biological factors that account for about 40% of chronic self-centeredness.

HOW CAN I SAFELY RELATE TO A NARCISSIST?

As you can tell from reading this article, I am not terribly keen on hanging out with self-centered people. I don’t bask in the sunshine of specialness. I don’t like how little they make other people feel. I prefer to believe what Sheldon Kopp, a famous psychoanalyst once wrote, “There are no great men” under a picture of a man sitting on a commode. I do believe that there are many people who continue to do really great things—police officers and their wives who risk their well-being each day for us, teachers who are invested in creating great lives in our children, and front-line medical workers who do thankless, exhausting jobs just to keep us alive. These examples are only the tip of the iceberg. So first of all, don’t hero worship unless there is concrete evidence for doing so. Praise deeds, not people.

Be street smart and take off the rose-colored glasses. You will never change or inspire a narcissist. You will not save him or her. Only God can do that, and He often fails at that. Don’t be naïve. No matter how many favors a self-centered person offers to do for you, politely turn down the favors. Don’t make a pact with the devil. You will suffer your worst nightmares if you do. Don’t become co-dependent with such a person. Whatever is missing in you will not be solved by the narcissist, it will only be made things worse. You cannot bask in another’s sunshine to be successful. Work on

yourself and your own sunshine. In your weaker moments don’t pity or feel sorry for the narcissist as that is a sign you are “being had.” A self-centered person can heal perhaps with the same odds that a person with terminal stage cancer can heal, but it is highly unlikely, especially when your loved one doesn’t even know (s)he has a problem. Save yourself, get support for yourself and run for the hills. I can speak from personal experience about these strategies. If you have to be around a narcissist set limits with him or her and don’t argue as it is a waste of time. Get psychological help if you are in the grips of a self-centered person.

HOW CAN I HELP CHANGE THE NARCISSISM IN OUR SOCIETY?

You can only do your part. Study this subject. Read *The Narcissism Epidemic* by Jean M. Twenge, Ph.D. and W. Keith Campbell, Ph.D. (Free Press, 2009). Basically, be the change that you wish would happen in our society. Lead with compassion and forgiveness and become a better listener and less of a speaker and know-it-all. Embrace humility as your best friend and don’t be proud of yourself until you have actually accomplished something praiseworthy. Realize that your accomplishments are mostly due to other people’s competence and love for you. Join the human race and remind yourself that you are not special. Raise unselfish kids. Read, *Unselfie: Why Empathetic Kids Succeed in Our All-About-Me World* by Michele Borba, E.D. (Touchstone Books, 2016). Have your kids do household chores early on in life to learn the joy of contributing to others. Set limits with them and listen to their feelings. Remember, “The hand that rocks the cradle, rules the world.”

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



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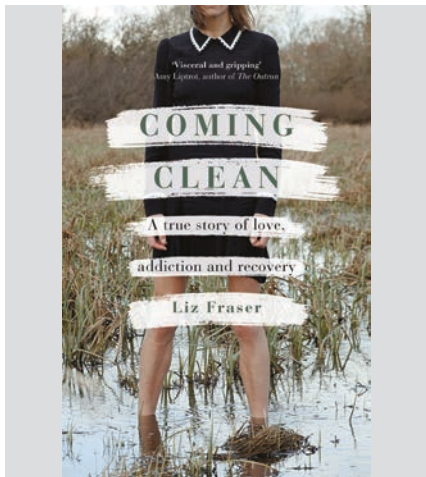
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Books



Coming Clean

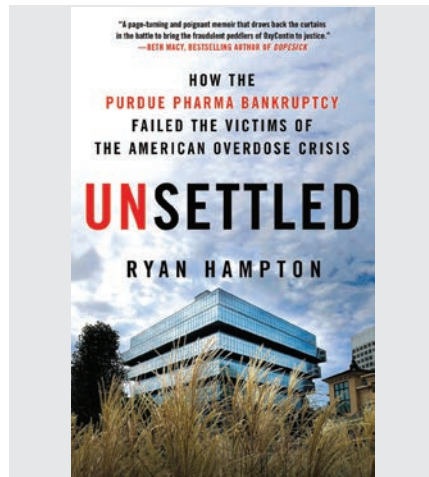
A True Story of Love, Addiction and Recovery

By Liz Fraser

GREEN TREE / AVAILABLE NOV. 30, 2021

This is the story of two people in love, who packed up their lives and drove a thousand miles across Europe in a transit van to the magical island of Venice to start their new lives and dreams together and raise their baby girl there. They left behind everything they didn't need. But they also brought something terrible with them: alcoholism.

In *Coming Clean*, Liz tells her story—of life with an alcoholic at his darkest moments, and the uncertain journey through recovery as her husband nears six months of sobriety. She gives a voice and offers hope to everyone watching a loved one struggle with substance abuse with the crucial reminder: You are not alone.



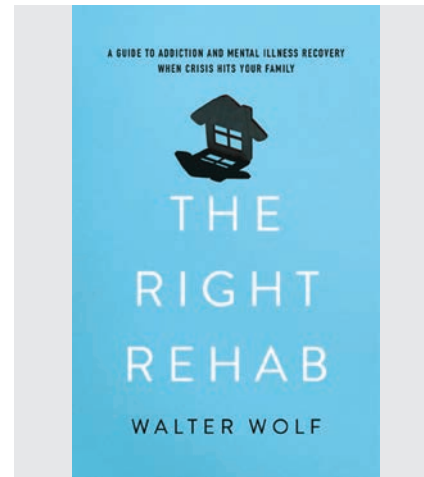
Unsettled

How the Purdue Pharma Bankruptcy Failed the Victims of The American Overdose Crisis

By Ryan Hampton
ST MARTIN'S PRESS

Unsettled is the inside story of Purdue's excruciating Chapter 11 bankruptcy proceedings, the company's eventual restructuring, and the Sackler family's evasion of any true accountability. It's also the untold story of how a group of determined ordinary people tried to see justice done against the odds—and in the face of brutal opposition from powerful institutions and even government representatives.

Unsettled is what happened behind closed doors—the story of a broken system that destroyed millions of lives and let the Sacklers off almost scot-free.

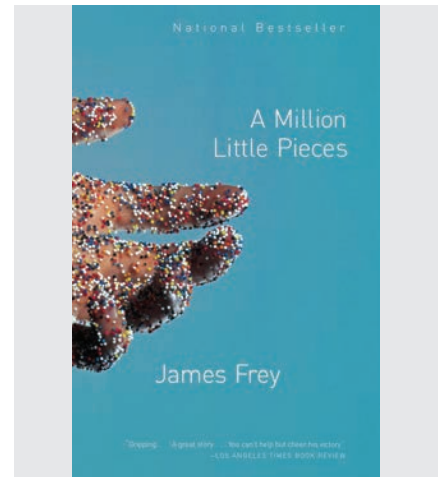


The Right Rehab

A Guide to Addiction and Mental Illness Recovery When Crisis Hits Your Family

By Walter Wolf
ROWMAN AND LITTLEFIELD PUBLISHERS

The Right Rehab is a step-by-step guide that details how to identify and access treatment options available to all individuals and families, no matter how plentiful or spare their resources. Due to Walter's relationships with the most ethical and renowned professionals in the treatment world, he is able to explain the treatment plan principled experts insist is the most evidence-based, dependable, and customizable for the individual who is fully committed to sobriety.



A Million Little Pieces

By James Frey
ANCHOR

Published in 2005, *A Million Little Pieces* refuses to fit any mold of drug literature. Inside the clinic, James is surrounded by patients as troubled as he is—including a judge, a mobster, a one-time world-champion boxer, and a fragile former prostitute to whom he is not allowed to speak to but their friendship and advice strikes James as stronger and truer than the clinic's droning dogma of *How to Recover*. James refuses to consider himself a victim of anything but his own bad decisions, and insists on accepting sole accountability for the person he has been and the person he may become—which runs directly counter to his counselors' recipes for recovery.

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.



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

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SUPPORT GROUPS / SOME MAY BE NOT BE MEETING DUE TO COVID-19

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: First Thursday, every other month, 6-7:30pm. The Emily Program staff provides answers to common questions and concerns of families and friends "new" to eating disorders, treatment and recovery. 2265 Como Ave, St. Paul, 55108. Free, drop in. Visit www.emilyprogram.com or call 651-645-5323.

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

Debtors Anonymous: a group of men and women who use the 12-Step program to solve problems with debt and other money issues.; www.daminnesota.org 952-953-8438. Check website for locations and different dates and times.

Richfield Codependents Anonymous: 7pm, men & women Richfield Lutheran Church, 60th and Nicollet or call 952-649-9514.

TUESDAYS

Recovering Couples Anonymous, 7pm. We are a 12 Step Group for couples wanting to find new ways to communicate. We provide strong couple support and model healthy couple-ship. Unity Church, 733 Portland Ave, St Paul, 55104. Enter the building through the parking lot door and take the elevator to the basement. Please check us out! Contact Dave at 651-214-5747 or Connie at 651-307-7964 for more information.

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

Debtors Anonymous: a group of men and women who use the 12-Step program to solve problems with debt and other money issues.; www.daminnesota.org 952-953-8438. Tues, 7-8 pm, Unity Church Unitarian (H), 732 Holly Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55104.

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

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

Nicotine Anonymous: 7-8pm at St. Columbia Church/School, 1330 Blair Ave., St. Paul, 55104. For more info call 952-404-1488. More locations.

Overeaters Anonymous Roseville: Meetings are held from 10-11am (and Saturday's from 8-9) at St. Christopher's Episcopal Church, 2300 N. Hamline Ave., Roseville, Room 218 Call Janie 651-639-4246 for more info.

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

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

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

WEDNESDAYS

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

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

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

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

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

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

Workaholics Anonymous: A 12-Step program of recovery for people addicted to non-stop work or continuous activity. Meeting is currently online via Zoom. Call Pat for link to the meeting or questions: 763-560-5199. www.workaholics-anonymous.org.

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

Atheist/Agnostic Alcoholics Anonymous, 3249 Hennepin Ave S., #55 (Men's Center, in the basement) Mpls, 7-8 pm., Open to Men and Women. For more info write tcAgnostic@gmail.com

THURSDAYS

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

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

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

Workaholics Anonymous: 12 step group for finding balance between work, activity and fun. Meets every Thur. 6-7:15 pm. We are currently meeting by Zoom. Contact us for link and any schedule updates: Gretchen 615-423-9444, Liz 612-229-8930, email: wafindingbalance@gmail.com.

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

Red Book ACA/ACOA: Recovery Church, 253 State, St. Paul, 7-8:30pm. For more info call Jacob at 612.819.9370 or Bruce at 651-407-6336.

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

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

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

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

SATURDAYS

Overeaters Anonymous Meeting: 9am at Macalester-Plymouth United Church, St. Paul. For those still suffering from compulsive overeating, bulimia and anorexia.

Nicotine Anonymous: Sat. 10am at Linden Hills Congregational Church, 4200 Upton Ave South, Mpls. Enter at the back door. 952-404-1488. Call for locations.

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

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

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

Overeaters Anonymous Newcomer Meeting: Third Saturday of the month, 1pm.2pm. Sumner Library, 611 Van White Memorial Blvd., Mpls, 55411. For more info contact Allison @ 612-499-0280, Gene @ 952-835-0789 or visit www.overeaters.org.

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

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

Debtors Anonymous: men and women using the 12-Steps to solve problems with debt and other money issues.; www.daminnesota.org 952-953-8438. 9-10am, Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church, 4120 17th Ave. S., Mpls, 55407 (rooms 7 & 8, enter sliding glass door facing parking lot.)

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

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

Adult Children of Alcoholics & Dysfunctional Families: Saturday, 10am, ACA Club Fridley, Moon Plaza, Boardroom in the lower level of Unity Hospital, 550 Osborne Road, Fridley. Please see www.acafridley.com for info.

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

South Side Men's Group: Saturdays, 8:20 to 10am Support for men working toward positive personal change. Creekside Community Center, 9801 Penn Ave. S. Bloomington. Visit www.southsidemensgroup.org.

SUNDAYS

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

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.

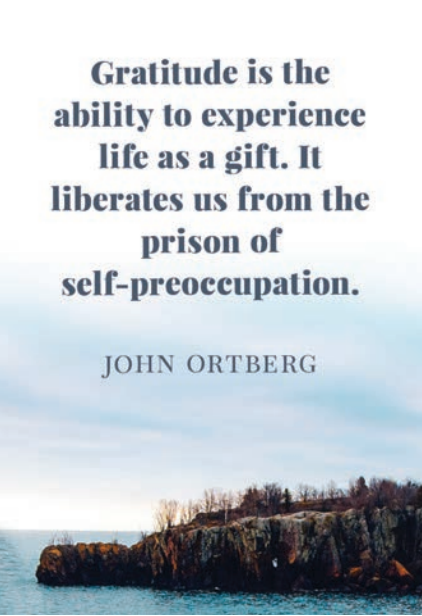
Deep-Healing Prayer Group: Discover how God provides healing of memories, emotions, and the body at St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Sundays, 7-9:30pm, www.Door2Hope.org. 612-874-1033.

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

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

ABOUT THE LISTINGS

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the support groups on this page. However, we recommend that you contact the group before attending. If you have a listing and need to make a change OR you would like your group included (and on our website), please reach out to us at phoenix@thephoenix-spirit.com. Thank you.





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In Gratitude

by Mary Lou Logsdon



"The root of joy is gratefulness...It is not joy that makes us grateful; it is gratitude that makes us joyful." — BROTHER DAVID STEINDL-RAST

Enter this season of gratitude—starting with the Thanksgiving holiday followed by our various spiritual celebrations of hope—with much for which to be grateful. I recognize a cornucopia of blessings, even those that only reveal themselves as a blessing in retrospect. Gratitude is a powerful antidote to the contagious urge of wanting more, different, better. When I name all that I am grateful for, I see the amazing plentitude I already have.

What follows is a cascade of things for which I am grateful. I encourage you to do the same. Once the well is primed, it is difficult to find the off switch!

I am grateful for the sunrise each morning, especially on days when the clouds break and colors stream through in crimson, coral, rose.

I am grateful for celestial nights with stars that constellate into images our long-ago ancestors amplified with myths we continue to retell.

I am grateful for farmers who bring their beautiful bounty to the market each weekend that I might enjoy fresh foods to delight my senses.

I am grateful for the healthcare workers who labor tirelessly for us that we may return to our families healed and nurtured by their skill and kindness.

I am grateful for neighbors who share their lives and stories and stop to chat as we all go about our days, especially during this past year's disruptions.

I am grateful for our Native sisters and brothers who honor the gifts of creation and introduced me to the practice of thanking a living plant before I enjoy her gifts.

I am grateful for our many immigrants and migrants who enrich my life with their foods, courage, sacrifices, and willingness to hold essential jobs that support our communities.

I am grateful for my parents who cared for me into my adulthood and blessed me with the opportunity to care for them as they transitioned into their next life.

I am grateful for the generations that follow mine for being willing to pick up the pieces, problems, and possibilities that my generation failed to do.

I am grateful for the gift of sobriety for many of my family and friends. Their honesty, vulnerability and ongoing commitment is a blessing to me and my community.

I am grateful for young parents who sacrifice their time and energy to grow the next generation of adults who will carry our dreams and hopes forward.

I am grateful for spiritual seekers who challenge traditions that have become stale, continuing to recognize a spirit still alive and not trapped in museum cathedrals.

I am grateful for people called to public service who wrestle with difficult issues that have no easy solution, that choose to not abandon the problem but rather to seek creative solutions.

I am grateful for teachers who teach the mastery of subject matter as well as the value of hard work and persistence, preparing our children for a world that needs their creativity, imagination, and innovation.

I am grateful for artists who help me see the world in new ways, be they visual artists, poets, or technicians.

I am grateful for hope-filled visionaries who fight to save the planet.

I am grateful for elders who set a vision of shared sacrifice and shared opportunities.

I am grateful for frontline workers who deal with us when we are not at our best, when we are afraid, when we let our emotions spew out through no fault of theirs.

I am grateful for scientists who laid the groundwork for vaccines that would give us a way through this most recent pandemic and who continue to imagine what we might need for viruses still unknown.

I am grateful for friends who have brightened the dark days of the last year with their humor, kindness, and willingness to listen to my fears and foibles.

I am grateful for a family who continues to gather with me and us in the messiness of finding our way through challenging times, even when we don't agree, see the world through different paradigms, and continue to love each other.

I am grateful for my Mexican American neighbors who introduced me to the Day of the Dead celebrations, reminding me that our loved ones continue to live with us in stories, memories, and gatherings.

I am grateful for the people who deliver the world to my door as they bring milk, mail, and a myriad of products I want but probably don't need.

I am grateful for hospice workers who allow me to be present to the needs of my dying loved ones.

I am grateful for my failures that have taught me much more than my successes. May I continue to appreciate their ongoing lessons.

I am grateful for those who listen to my ramblings as I search for hope and meaning. You are the string in my labyrinth by which I can find my way.

I am grateful for the gift of losses that remind me that what I have is sufficient and often a great plenty.

I am grateful for composers, singers, and musicians who create lilting melodies, rhapsodic motifs, and poetic ballads that carry me to serene places and soothe my weary spirit.

I am grateful for nature's cycles of life and death, ever reminding me that this, too, shall pass and death makes room for new life.

I am grateful for you, the readers, who are all part of this journey. I hope you find yourselves in this litany and know that I am grateful for your service, your engagement, your presence wherever and whenever our paths cross.

As we enter this season of gratitude may your lives be filled with joy and wonder.

Amen. Shalom. Namaste. Peace. Thank you.

Mary Lou Logsdon provides Spiritual Direction in the Twin Cities. She is an instructor in The Sacred Ground Spiritual Direction Formation Program. She can be reached at logsdon.marylou@gmail.com.