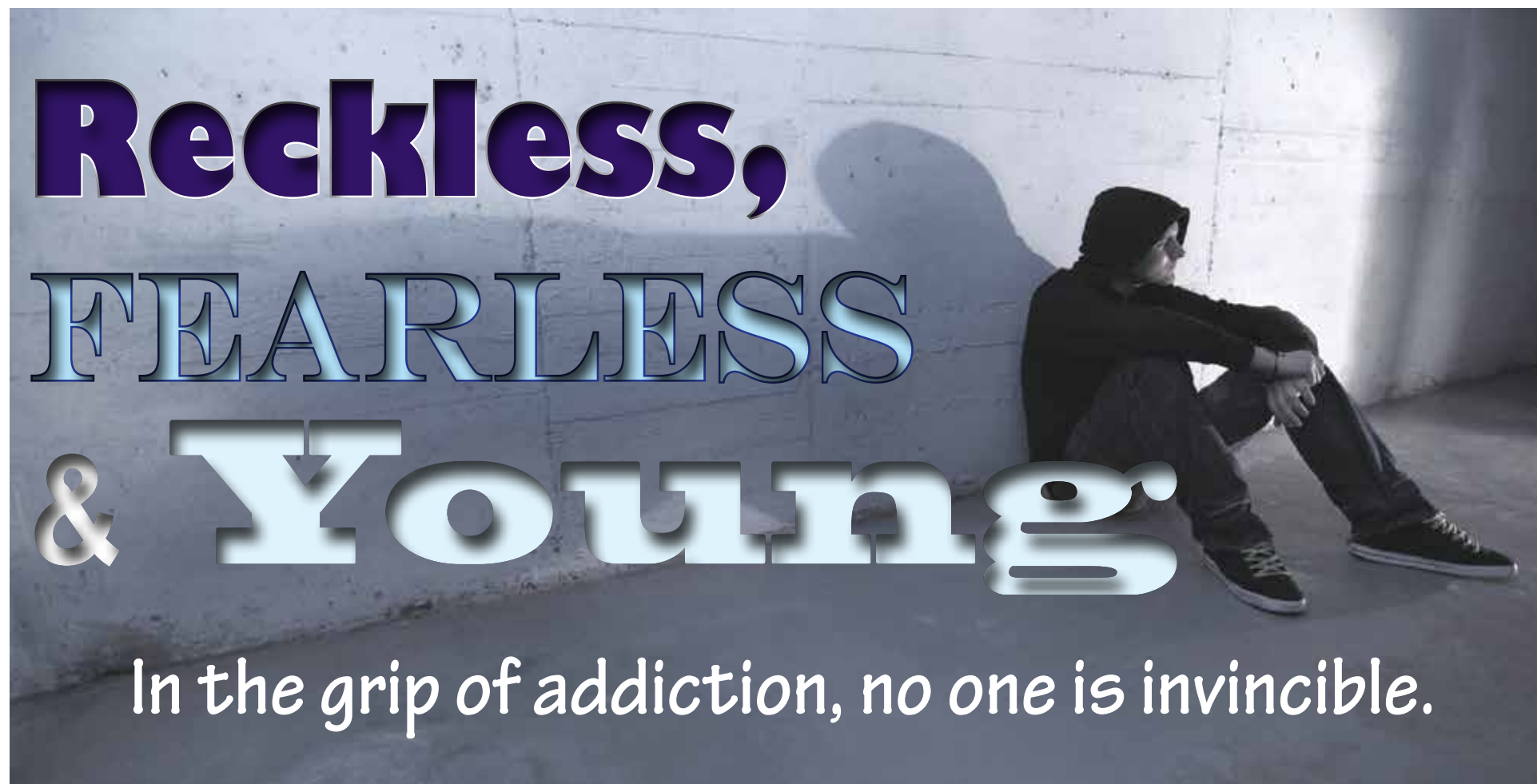


Together AZ



NOVEMBER 2015

Inspiring Success on the Road to Recovery



Editor's Note:

Every addict and alcoholic I know, including myself, have some hair raising tales and stories of survival. Yet, I'm always intrigued when I meet a young person in recovery, someone who has completely turned their life around. Gordie Bufton is one of them. He's a twenty-something, good looking guy, who upon first meeting one would never think was once an addict.

I think the stigma of addiction still holds the image of addicts and alcoholics as homeless, tattered, worn, beaten down, weathered, old people. That is not the truth.

Only now is our society recognizing that addiction has many faces, and it touches all of us. It does not discriminate. Addiction can take the lives of the rich or poor, young, old, teen or adolescent at any time.

Gordie's story is not unlike many others. What he is accomplishing today in recovery is why I chose to feature him for this edition.

It is my hope families will read this interview together and open up the discussion. The time is NOW to talk about it and not run from it.

All of us can make a difference, we need to keep the conversation going. — Barbara Nicholson-Brown

An interview with Gordie Bufton, Speaker, coach and author of *Eluding Reality: A Memoir about Drugs, Psych Wards, and Recovery*

Start with your introduction to drugs and when it became the reason for you to get up in the morning.

Growing up at the golf course in Atlanta, I spent a lot of time with players considerably older than myself. This was my introduction into the world of destructive behaviors. The guys were always talking about wild parties and things they had done. These conversations always interested me, but I was a "good" kid and didn't want to do anything that could jeopardize my grades or golf career.

This all shifted when I experienced my first romantic breakup. I didn't know how to process the painful emotions. Prior to my senior year of high school, I had tried alcohol and pot a few times. I enjoyed the sensations and feelings from these substances, but didn't have anything I needed to numb out. This all changed with the breakup.

Smoking pot removed the pain I was in from my broken heart.

We live in a society that conditions us not to feel emotions and I fell into the bear trap that kept me in its jaws for the next three years.

Somehow smoking everyday didn't completely destroy my golf game and I managed to get a

scholarship to Colorado State University-Pueblo. In college my smoking and dealing escalated and my golf game declined rapidly. I no longer had anyone looking over my shoulder.

Every morning I was waking up with a bowl of weed next to me and I'd smoke until my eyes were too heavy to keep open. Even though I was stoned, I would always attend class and practice golf, but the rest of my day was spent in a haze dealing to fund my growing habit.

The day golf season ended, my best friend was at my apartment smoking and asked if I wanted to try Ecstasy, (today known as Molly).

I didn't educate myself about the real dangers of Ecstasy (*depression, mental illness, memory loss, addiction, and death*) and tried it. Pot wasn't creating the same high for me anymore. It was love from the start. This drug allowed me to escape my reality and enter into a drug induced world.

Attending classes lost their importance — my focus was using and selling drugs.

I spiraled out of control using enough Ecstasy to fuel a rave and trying to smoke as much pot as Snoop Dogg every week.

continued page 8

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By Barbara Nicholson-Brown

Publisher's Note

The Haves or the Have Nots – It is a Choice

With Thanksgiving just a few weeks away – I was thinking how the word gratitude is probably spoken more often than any other day of the year. We're openly grateful and thankful for our families, friends, the food we eat and the blessings in our lives.

What about the other 364 days of the year? Do I focus on what I have or have not? Sometimes the have nots take over my thinking and the domino effect can quickly spiral into the could'as, should'as, how comes, and why didn't (or did) _____ (fill in the blank) _____ happen?

If I choose to tag along with that thinking I can easily dig a deep hole and jump in. Thankfully, through the years of practicing a fairly easy and powerful program of living, I'm always given a hand up.

Whether or not I see it all the time, life is perfect...which means I accept what is, and it is not always an easy task.

There are events I sometimes wish I could change; the most obvious not having to lose Bill, my husband and best friend to cancer.

The first few years after he passed were difficult as I searched for anything to be grateful for. My family of friends and support stepped up, encouraging me to take another step.

Everything I have or am today is because I opened my eyes and heart to a life in recovery. I'm thankful, blessed and honored to walk this path with you — very grateful, and never alone.

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The Day the Silence Ended:
UNITE to Face Addiction,
Washington DC

By Jeff Grubert

What’s exciting about the recovery movement sweeping our nation is that we finally have a way of speaking about long-term recovery without breaking the anonymity set forth in Alcoholics Anonymous.

Why would a person with long-term sobriety want to learn a new way of speaking about recovery? Simply put, everything we have experienced in long term recovery is due to the fact that we are sober, that we have a loving relationship with a Higher Power, and that we have become aware that there are millions of people still suffering from the disease of addiction. In fact, the numbers reveal that there are not enough AA meetings available in the US for the number of people who need treatment. With this fact in mind I have come to support all roads to recovery and I want to help open more doors for people who need treatment now.

How can those of us who have long term recovery stay stagnant in the guilt and shame that plagues our spiritual growth and not step out of our comfort zone to reach more people who suffer from this cunning, baffling and powerful disease?

The New Recovery Advocacy
Movement

It is all about removing the stigmas associated with the disease of addiction. It’s about suiting up and showing up as a recovered person to work, speak, and vote for positive changes in healthcare and justice systems. There is a long history of members of AA getting involved in advocacy for people who still suffer.

Even Bill W. himself appeared in front of Congress advocating on behalf of the alcoholic. I was moved deeply by the movie depicting his commitment beyond the rooms of AA and that film is now available on Netflix — *Anonymous People*.

October 4, 2015, with Hurricane Joachim threatening to cancel the gathering, I stepped out of my comfort zone and flew to Washington DC to stand with Joe Walsh, Steven Tyler, Sheryl Crow, The Fray, Jason Isbell, Dr. OZ, Patrick Kennedy, the Surgeon General of the United States, and thousands of people with long term recovery as a public witness asking for US policy changes related to the way people with the disease of addiction are being treated in the United States.

Thousands of us showed up to say we are no longer going to stand on the sidelines and watch those who suffer from addiction being treated with discrimination.



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- November 2-6
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- November 2-6
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We stood together in the hope of a future where the medical establishment would incorporate the incredible insights that have come forth from 12 step meetings on how best to treat addiction and combine it with the hundreds of ways recovery can be offered to the alcoholic who still suffers. We acknowledge openly that Bill W. had a spiritual experience in a hospital and we demand better medical care at the entry level but also better long term care that will follow the patient for as long as they need it. We gathered in Washington DC to end the silence, to step out of the guilt and shame that plagues us when we are drinking and even when we are sober.

From the front stage with electric guitars pounding for 6 hours to the back row of a standing room only crowd gathered at the Washington monument in DC, the cries for change could be felt and heard. I met parents who marched with pictures of love ones lost to the disease and people carrying posters reading, “*We Recover and WE Vote*,” and “*Incarceration is NOT treatment*.”

The most important news was delivered by Vivek H. Murthy, Surgeon General of the United States who walked out on stage and delivered these words while pointing enthusiastically at the crowd, “I’m on your side,” then went on to announce that his office has completed a comprehensive report on drug addiction in America. It will be released in 2016. This historic moment was met with a standing ovation and cheers from the crowd. The significance of the SG’s report is as important as its publication on

smoking in 2014. Dr. Murthy spoke passionately about his commitment to ending the stigma of the disease of addiction and to challenge the federal government to uphold the current healthcare laws that the insurance companies are disregarding.

The founders of **United To Face Addiction** (facingaddiction.org) made a special plea to all people in the United States who enjoy the benefits of long-term recovery to become more aware of the crisis we are facing as it relates to the treatment and incarceration of people who suffer from this disease. They spoke loud and clear that we must use our vote to help those who still suffer, especially as more and more people seek recovery.

If 23 million people in the United States would vote for candidates that advocate for better insurance coverage and treatment instead of incarceration we would not only solve the massive crowding in prisons across the country, but people suffering from addiction would receive fair treatment options so they could be guided toward the incredible gifts of living a life of recovery.

Ironically, the day the silence ended, October 4, 2015 was the Feast Day of St. Francis of Assisi, whose prayer has been suggested as the backbone of Step 11 for over 75 years. What I experienced in Washington DC on October 4, 2015 was surely a manifestation and promise of the prayer of St. Francis. It was a spiritual experience for me and countless others who weathered the storm to take a stand. I have almost 27 years of sobriety, three beautiful daughters, and all of the

blessings that have come from the hard work I got to do in the first half of my life. Even still, the march on Washington DC with UNITE to Face Addiction has given me a new vision and new passion for the sober life.

Now, what is available to those of us in long term recovery who want to make a difference is not only the gifts of community that come from local meetings, sponsorship, and commitments on a local level, but a doorway to enter a bigger room with a bigger mission to end discrimination for people who suffer from our disease.

We can and will make it possible for millions more to follow in our footsteps. I support ALL roads to recovery! I am UNITED to Face Addiction! I am a proud, anonymous member of AA, committed to the health and sustainability of Alcoholics Anonymous, but when I step out of the holy ground of those rooms, I am on fire as a person in long term recovery working, speaking, writing, and now advocating for those of us who still suffer. Why don’t you join us?

Jeffrey Bryan Grubert, was raised in the San Francisco Bay Area in the 1960’s and 70’s. He spent 30 years building a successful home entertainment company in Laguna Beach, CA. He voluntarily entered a treatment center for alcohol and drug addiction and has spent most of his life committed to practicing and teaching the art of living a sober life with the help of disciplines including the 12 steps, the Catholic faith, and Zen meditation.



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Soul at the Helm of Destiny

By Alan Cohen

When actress Meryl Streep was about to graduate from college, she planned to become a lawyer. She applied to law school and set up an appointment with an admissions officer. On the morning of her interview, she overslept and missed her appointment. At that point she decided she would rather pursue an acting career instead. And aren't we glad? Meryl Streep is considered by many fans and critics to be the greatest living actress. She has garnered three Academy Awards out of 19 nominations, 6 Golden Globes out of 28 nominations, and a vast array of other acting awards, totaling 171 wins out of 260 nominations.

It was no accident that Meryl Streep overslept on the day of her admissions interview. While her intellect told her she should become a lawyer, her inner being recognized her grander destiny. On that crucial morning her soul commandeered her life path. What a loss to the world it would have been if Meryl Streep's true talents were missed because she followed her mind rather than her heart!

You, too, have a destiny your soul has chosen. Your intellect may tell you one thing, but your soul continually prompts you to stay on course with your mission. In the first Superman movie, Superman's parents, realizing that their planet was about to be destroyed, placed the baby Superman in a space capsule and propelled him off toward earth. During his long journey, a series of audio recordings taught Superman about his powers and purpose. By the time he arrived on earth, he knew who he was and what he was here to do.

Likewise, you and I were seeded with the awareness of our true identity, potential, and destiny before we came to earth. But then we forgot. The density of the three-dimensional world obscured our memory of our identity and our vi-

sion. But in spite of the distractions of the toys and trinkets of trivial purposes, your soul had not forgotten who you are and what you are here to do. Your inner being is constantly urging you to live in accord with your true mission.

We all have critical choice points, defining moments at which we are invited and urged to stay on track with our destiny. When I was 14 years old I was living in a bad part of town with many seedy influences. With pimples, braces, and a gawky body, my self-esteem was in the pits. I felt lost and alone. Then one day I received an invitation to attend a youth brunch at my synagogue. While I had no reason to attend—I was turned off to religion—something inside me urged me to go. There I met a young rabbi who gave an impassioned speech that stirred my soul. I became deeply involved in the temple youth group, that the rabbi became my mentor, I associated with friends of a higher caliber, and my life changed entirely. That event and my relationship with my mentor were pivotal incidents in my life. They were my dates with destiny.

Perhaps you are now facing a critical choice point in your own life. "Should I be with a certain relationship partner?" Or "should I leave?" "Where can I find a job that will bring me both passion and income?" "Where is my right home?" "What can I do to foster my health?" "What spiritual path belongs to me?"

While you may have spent a great deal of time and effort asking your mind, other people, and external sources for the answers to these important questions, you may not have asked your soul. The mind wonders, but the soul knows. Ask your soul to guide your destiny, and it will do so with amazing results. One of the most affirmations you can state it, "I now allow my soul to guide me to my

highest destiny." Your soul will immediately leap to respond. Love will have its way.

When you come to the end of your life, there is but one important question you will need to answer: "Was I true to my soul's calling?" Did you follow your deepest guidance? Were you the person you came to be, and did you do the things you came to do? Do not assess your success by the yardsticks of achievement dictated to you by others. They are often shallow and do not apply to you. Assess your success by how much your outer life aligned with your inner truth. Real achievement is more spiritual than material. Outer attainment means nothing if your soul is starving. Soul nourishment brings true value of life.

You can wander from your soul's path, but you cannot lose it. Even the apparent detours are a part of the journey to your true destination. What seems to be an oversleeping that misses one appointment is really an awakening to keep your true appointment. The next time you see Meryl Streep in a movie, remember that soul stands at the helm of destiny, and all divinely guided appointments will be kept.



Alan Cohen is the author of *A Course in Miracles Made Easy*. Join Alan's celebrated Life Coach Training Program, beginning January 6, 2016, to become a professional life coach or incorporate life coaching skills in your career or personal life.

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How Many Families?



*Heartbreak when a family has lost their son to the disease of addiction.
Hope when another is celebrating their daughter's first year of recovery.*

We've been working on this issue for close to 30 years, and it's time to end the heartbreak. It's time to break the silence and face our tangled history with substance abuse and treat it as the public health epidemic it is.

For too many, the silence has been deafening. It's manifested in fear, frustration and shame. All because addiction is not treated like any other disease, but rather as a crime and a moral failing, treated with prison and lectures, rather than therapy and medicine.

One mother's story illustrates this disparity in diseases. When diagnosed with breast cancer, her home was filled with family and friends, delivering cards and casseroles. Yet, when her son was struggling with addiction, there was silence. No one called. No one brought food. No one offered comfort and support.

Shunned and ashamed, families have had to take out a second or third mortgage on their homes, have received subpar care – care that they paid for – or watched their child fail out of college because there is no sober housing on campus. There is too little respect for their pain and too much judgment about where they went wrong.

How many families will have to bury a child before we change the way America treats those who care for a loved one with a substance use disorder? How many families will make the heart-wrenching decision to call the police on their own daughter because it is the only way they can get her a treatment bed? How many communities will succumb to substance abuse because funding support for prevention programs has been slashed?

Addiction affects not just the person addicted, but entire families and communities, crossing all social and economic boundaries. Yet, we do not discuss its devastating reach or the few resources we have to address it. Family, friends, neighbors and colleagues are among the 85 million Americans affected by addiction; and its effects are born out in both economic and human costs.

The estimated financial cost of substance abuse in America is \$417 billion dollars a year related to crime, lost work productivity and health care. These costs include the 4.6 million drug-related emergency department visits, of which 50 percent are linked to prescription drug abuse or misuse. The human cost? It is almost too much to bear. Forty-four Americans die each day of prescription painkiller overdoses – that's 16,060 people a year – making substance abuse the leading cause of accidental death in our country.

This October thousands gathered in Washington, D.C. for the first-ever event of its kind, UNITE to Face Addiction, and with advocacy around new legislation, the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA). This bipartisan bill offers very real and effective solutions that can impact the way we address, treat and advocate around substance use disorders. It tackles head on the issues of jail time and public health and safety, necessary if we are going to embrace genuine and lasting change.

Let's work to bring awareness to and transformation around addiction. The silence and heartbreak of addiction ends, and hope begins.

Marcia Lee Taylor
President and CEO, Partnership for Drug Free Kids



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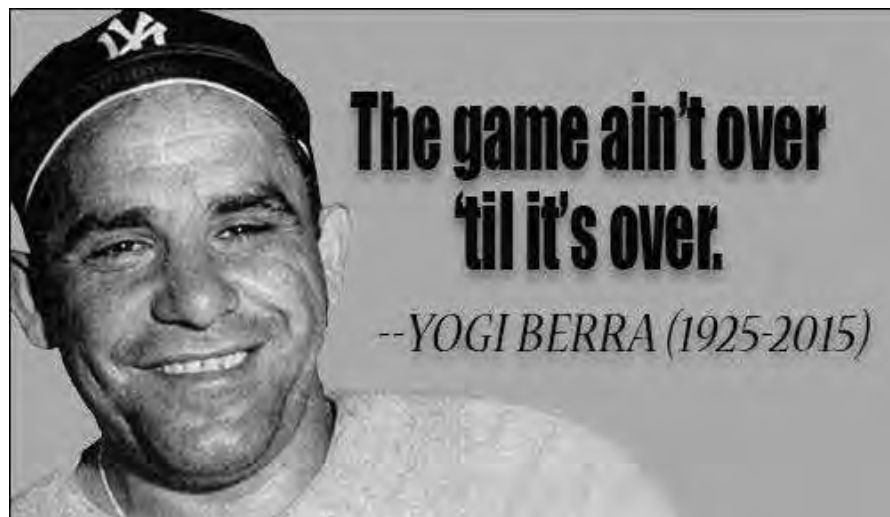
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LIFE 101

By COACH CARY BAYER www.carybayer.com

The Koans of Yogi Berra



In the Japanese tradition, mind-blowing koans were used by Zen roshis to help liberate their students. In the American baseball tradition mind-blowing koans came from a yogi, the great yogi known as Berra. Leave it to a mind-mystifying Missouri-born/New York Yankee/Italian American Catholic with a Hindu yogi-sounding name who invoked Japanese Zen koans to die recently on Yom Kippur, the highest holy day in the Jewish calendar. He was always outside the box.

The most famous koan—"What is the sound of one hand clapping?"—like all others has no rational answer. They were designed to confound the mind, to snap it, as it were, into a higher realm of Being.

Socrates said that, "You have to lose your mind to come to your senses." Yogi Berra seemed to sense this when he spoke about the mind, saying: "Ninety percent of the game is half mental." His math certainly has us scratching our heads.

While his famous Yogi-isms sometimes make us lose our minds, he certainly helped the Yankees win. His 10 World Series rings are the most of any player in major league baseball history. From 1950-1956, he finished fourth or higher in the balloting for MVP in the American League. Three times he was named the A.L.'s most valuable player, but many times over, he's been named the English language's most valuable slayer.

Malapropos or Maya Busters?

On one level, Yogi was clearly a master of malapropos, a niche he shared with the daffy Gracie Allen and the zany Chico Marx. But perhaps he was baseball's master of Maya busting, as well. Maya is the Sanskrit term for the illusion of the human condition—our higher nature asleep and somehow thinking we're smaller than we are, like an amnesiac king who behaves like a beggar. While we laugh at the absurdity of Yogi's malapropos, some of them aren't so crazy after all.

The Journey

Yogis help their students on their spiritual journeys. So, it's not surprising that this Yogi would say a few things

about the nature of the journey, as well. To wit: "You've got to be very careful if you don't know where you're going, because you might not get there." Or: "If you don't know where you are going, you will wind up somewhere else."

On the journey there are often important decisions to be made, so "When you come to a fork in the road, take it." And if you do take that fork, you feel secure that you're moving swiftly along, but when a fellow traveler told Yogi that it seemed as if they were lost, Yogi replied: "Yeah, but we're making great time!" It's hard to argue with that. He also discourages the use of certain provisions for the journey. "Why buy good luggage?" he asked. "You only use it when you travel."

The Now and the Future

Eckhart Tolle wrote about the power of now, but to Yogi the Now isn't the Now everyone sees. When asked what time it was, his response was unforgettable: "You mean now?" He could be as obtuse about the future as he was about the present: "The future ain't what it used to be." It's hard to argue with that kind of wisdom.

Death

Any true yogi, who can be mystifying about life, can also be mystifying about death. The Yogi Berra was no exception: "You should always go to other people's funerals; otherwise, they won't go to yours," he advised. It makes good sense. He must have even confounded the Angel of Death as he, no doubt, confounded his wife Carmen when she asked him about burial plans if he should die before her, saying, "Yogi, you are from St. Louis, we live in New Jersey, and you played ball in New York. If you go before I do, where would you like me to have you buried?" Yogi replied, "Surprise me."

It's possible that as much as he blew the minds of the living, he might even blow the minds of the dead who he meets up with in the afterlife. Especially if you consider this famous Yogi-ism: "Are you dead yet?" This Lawrence Peter Berra may soon have St. Peter scratching his halo.

A Full Plate

By Dr. Dina Evan



Do you feel like you have a very full plate at the moment? With so much going on, it can be difficult to feel thankful. Things we have no control over, and dread having to face, seem to be coming into our lives at lightening speed. All of our past denial is up for healing. Life has become full of these challenges for nearly everyone who is conscious because of the times in which we are living. Things catch our breath and give us pause to wonder if there is a safe way out. Family conflicts. Marriages and relationships that are at break up or break through points. Financial challenges and spiritual questions about the future.

In the process of facing these challenges, while the energies of light and dark continue to define themselves, and render us moment-to-moment choices, it can be very easy to get lost in what appears to be overwhelming negativity. Just listen to the election rhetoric! Without discernment, these vexing energies can seem the loudest. They seem determined to take center stage.

It seems as I grow older, my focus becomes less outward and calls me to take on a more intimate perspective. As a friend of mine says, “I feel more of a need to “turtle in,” take cover, and try to see the things in my life that bring joy. My priorities have a more emotional hue. They arrive on my list only after reflection on what there is in life that really fulfills me. The picking and choosing of my focus, where I spend my energy, feels more important now.

The most profound moments for me are those that contain deep connection to myself and others. They are the opportunities life gives us for a cosmic celebration and a quiet knowing smile

In the wings, these more quiet, sustainable energies of great power do not force themselves into the spot light. The quiet safety of shared decisions made from principle and path, rather than old pain are just waiting to be noticed. The spontaneous, uncontrived actions taken from an open heart are egoless, given from pure consciousness. They are found in our courage and willingness to change. They are in truths spoken out of respect for oneself or another, in feelings of Oneness allowed — sought after. The power comes in a decision born out of the need for sheer attunement with ourselves. We can feel

it in the quiet refuge found when we release our need to change that which cannot be changed. Great power waits for us in the unbridled joy of new and old love with anyone. It’s in ethics in action or the silent gift of unspoken understanding. Its there in respect for the wisdom of our older ones and in the cherishing of the innocence of our young.

That power waits in the intense courage found in a willingness to move through fear without a loss of integrity, or a covering up of our human frailty. It’s in the undisturbed peace and balance arising from a lack of expectations and in a crescent moon perched above the silhouette of a dark mountain. You can hear it in the unadulterated joy of spontaneous laughter and see it into crimson dawn highlighted with a tapestry of purple clouds.

It’s the profound peace of letting go.

So many reminders that what is real and sacred are always available. The reality is that freedom, peace, is found in a simple change of perception or a clear decision that we are worthy of being authentic, and, at the same time, loved.

Perhaps, at this time, it all boils down to something very simple. Isn’t it true that the most profound truths are always the most simple? The one and only thing that gives me joy and creates the ecstasy is always right here.

During each day, I will take time to be with myself, look for that which is positive and with some person that I meet, I will make a difference, connect at a deep level.

That delicious joy lights the rest of my way each day and leaves those negative energy on center stage without an audience.



Dr. Evan is a life/soul coach in Arizona working with individuals, couples and corporations. She specializes in relationships, personal and professional empowerment, compassion and consciousness.

For more information 602-

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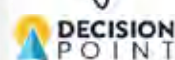


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RECKLESS, from page 1

Two months after my first high on Ecstasy and tens of thousands of dollars later, my folks pulled me out of college. I was broke, and looked like a skeleton after barely eating for two months (*Ecstasy depletes the appetite*). I stopped using Ecstasy when I moved home, but continued to smoke marijuana and deal for the next few years.

You could have had a career as a professional golfer. What happened?

During high school I lost the inner drive, becoming more interested in socializing at the course — instead of practicing. Talent without determination and hard work is nothing. Someone I grew up with on the high school team now had four wins on the PGA Tour. I made a different choice. I create more of a positive impact now, than I ever would have made playing professionally.

Do young adults, teens, grade schoolers have greater access to drugs and alcohol today?

Availability to access drugs and alcohol blows my mind. It was easier for me to get drugs than to get booze growing up. Dealers never ask for an ID. What scares me now is who the youth of today look up to as role models. The NFL or NBA doesn't go a week without an arrest. Musicians love to flaunt their extravagant party lifestyles. This is a direct message to

our youth this type of behavior is acceptable. We need to change this as a culture and demand more from these people of influence.

Would you consider it to be the 'road less traveled' for young people who do not engage in addictive behaviors?

As I state in my memoir *Eluding Reality: A Memoir about Drugs, Psych Wards, and Recovery*, I chose the path filled with drugs and temptations. Children today have many options to numb their pain. As a society we need to foster a culture where it is okay to talk about feelings and seek help for disharmony in our inner worlds — without judgment.

At every talk I have ever given, I stress how the real work begins when we get clean and sober. It begins when we have to deal with stress and pressure using healthy coping mechanisms.

You share your story with young audiences — do they talk openly about their struggles with drugs and alcohol?

I've had the privilege of sharing my story with tens of thousands of youngsters and it amazes me how at such a young age they start using drugs and engaging in dangerous behavior. Two students in a 6th grade class admitted for the first time they were cutting themselves after a presentation, 6th grade! I was able to get them to talk with their school counselor and



Bufton speaking about addiction and healthy lifestyle choices at Camp Verde Unified School District High School freshman class.

begin getting the help they so desperately needed.

Very few kids can resist the peer pressure to use substances. My mission to help raise this minimal percentage.

What was your bottom?

My rock bottom was oh-so-low. My mentor, who helped me create a **Holistic Addiction Recovery Coaching Program** says rock bottom is the moment one decides to change. I love this definition.

Rock bottom is different for every individual. Sometimes we have to experience numerous bottoms before finally making the choice to change.

"It was a sunny day in southwest Florida and I was sitting on the beach smoking pot with my friends when this divine message hit me. Lose your addiction or you will lose your life. I had never heard a message so loud and clear in all my life." Now seriously wouldn't it be great if rock bottom was actually like that? Mine wasn't so harmonious.

Rock bottom was a three week span — fueled by a three week cocaine binge. I was living at home and my coke usage escalated. Heck, I didn't even like it very much, but that's how addictions work.

My parents had finally had enough of me and had to kick me out. I had a few grand left and figured I could fund my lifestyle as a dealer.

They confiscated my cell phone and Mom had demanded Dad search me for drugs before leaving home. I had a half ounce of pot in my pocket. Dad found it and Mom went off the deep end, ran for the phone to call the cops, as dad barricaded the door. He walked down the hall for a moment, and I took the opportunity to jump out the window and run for my freedom. He chased me down the street screaming.

As fate would have it, a kid I sold drugs to was about to snort a line of coke in a secluded location on my escape route, and I demanded he give me a ride out of the neighborhood. We did coke all night.

The next few days I bounced around friends' couches, paying my way with drugs and using non stop to numb the pain.

Some of my friends and I were at the beach a few days into my couch surfing career when some kids asked me to buy them beer and I figured since I had a fake ID being 19, I took the opportunity to make a few bucks. When I returned to the beach I couldn't find my friends. So I "borrowed" the truck of the guy where I was crashing, and went back to clean up.

It was now time to put into play the plan I been scheming to get the cash and hash in my bedroom. Since no one was home, I smashed in my window and walked right out the front door. As I was driving back to find my friends, I got pulled over.

A gram of hash in my pocket (a controlled substance) warranting lots of jail time. My dealer at the beach informed me the cops found an assortment of drugs in my room and had issued a warrant for my arrest.

I just couldn't go to jail as I handed over my fake ID to the cop, but within a few minutes I was arrested.

During the week in jail I desperately tried to get bailed out. I turned 20 years old behind bars. Not the way I envisioned entering my twenties.

When I was released, the first thing I did was get stoned. Even the friends I used drugs with everyday had reached their limit and kicked me out. Homeless and friendless I spent a few nights on the streets or sleeping on the beach.

At this point my only option was to take a bus to visit my best friend from third grade in Macon, GA.

When I arrived in Macon I was strung out and had smoked the last of my weed. I spent all day looking for my friend. It was impossible to think clearly.

I remember it was night and stumbling around Macon I spotted a group of young guys and asked them for help. But they had other plans for me.

One grabbed the back of my collar and started punching me in the back of the skull. The punches were so brutal I felt something warm running down

the back of my neck. After four or five punches I heard something hit the cement, it was a red brick.

After the brute dropped the brick, he then slammed me on the cement trying to break my neck. I was bracing myself with my left wrist as my body was bouncing off the pavement. During one of these throws I lost consciousness. Life flashed before my eyes and the images weren't pretty. Twentieth birthday in jail, parents kicked me out, and my addiction out of control. A choice had to be made in that moment — maybe it wasn't a choice.

I spent the night in the hospital and was released the next morning with a broken wrist and 12 stitches in my head. I was given painkillers, and like any good addict I abused them. After a few days at my best friends, he placed me on another bus.

I returned to Florida and spent another night on the beach. I didn't sleep much because I knew a tough decision had to be made. Either continue down this path which will land me back in jail or dead...or get sober.

It wasn't easy and my entry into recovery was anything but smooth.

What message can you give parents on how to talk with their kids on this uncomfortable topic.

Be an adult and get uncomfortable as your child's life is at jeopardy. I have spent some time with Dr. Drew Pinsky one of the leading experts on addiction and he says there are two conversations to have with your children about drugs.

1. Do not tell your kids what you did during your adolescence, young adulthood, unless you want your kids to do the same.

2. Be honest about your addiction and talk to them about your recovery and how vital this is to your life.

If kids know their parents have used drugs they think it's okay for themselves to experiment.

To those parents who provide the substance thinking they'd rather kids do it around them. It's illegal and you're risking going to jail. It only takes a moment to have a fatal reaction.

With celebrities and pop culture icons losing their lives to overdoses, do you think young people believe it won't happen to them, that they are invincible?

At every school audience I speak to I have the privilege to get the concept across **no one is invincible**. Dangerous life altering effects happen from bad choices. It takes one wrong decision to end a life. Life is fragile and we should treat it as a gift not an entitlement.

Talk about your time in institutions.

When I got sober as anyone in recovery will tell you, it wasn't rainbows and gumdrops. I had to deal with life for the first time in years without a

way to numb my emotions.

I was known to relapse and smoke pot and go into a drug induced psychosis. These episodes would land me psych wards. The first stay was two weeks and I was given lots of antipsychotic medication. I'd taken a lot of powerful substances in my using days, but these pills were stronger and the positive side effects nowhere to be found.

During one of the stays I escaped the institution. Two helicopters and six police dogs were searching for the mentally ill man in boxers. They couldn't find me for hours. When they did, I was strapped to a hospital bed for days and they wouldn't let me up for any reason. I was there for 30 days.

I was admitted five times to three different facilities and labeled bipolar, schizophrenic, and depressed. I spent over two months locked away.

Was I crazy? That is debatable, but a judge did label me legally insane.

To learn about how normal people are in psych wards and all the details check out *Eluding Reality* on Amazon.

I was fortunate to be sent to a rehab center now located in Sedona, AZ, Alternative to Meds Center.

This center specializes in medication withdrawal. They did a slow taper off the antipsychotic medications and rebalanced my brain chemistry with supplements, exercise, nutritious food, massage, yoga and sauna detox. I have never taken prescription medication since and now live a "normal" life. *Warning: never stop taking prescription medication without the permission from a medical doctor.*

How can we change the perception that substance use and alcoholism are and can be deadly?

It's important for those who have lost loved ones to speak up. It's important for those who have almost died because of their addictions to speak up. As someone in recovery I feel a civil duty to share my story with others to inspire hope.

Do you view today's youth as too entitled to believe they can do whatever they want without consequences?

No. I strive to empower more youth to know they can accomplish whatever it is they set their hearts to. I had a chat with a 16 year old entrepreneur who said, "fail young fail fast, it's just learning experiences." He will have challenges of course, but at least he's playing the game of life and not sitting on the sideline and wondering what could be.

The consequences for breaking the law are strict and part of the reason over two million addicts are incarcerated. Today's youth need to be taught the consequences for their actions in school and if they still decide to break the law, it's on them. When I was dealing drugs I knew the possible sentences, but still did it.

What does it mean to be in recovery?

In recovery is going to mean something different for every single one of us. Personally, I choose not to drink alcohol or use any mind altering substance since April 22, 2010. I don't even like taking Advil.

Does this mean the hard-core IV drug addict who now has a beer once a month has to restart his clean date every time this happens? I don't think so. In recovery we tend to hold others up to our own standards. This mindset can be detrimental and creates a lot of shame. Who am I to judge what being in recovery means to you?

If I choose to drink or smoke pot I know the potential consequences and it's a risk I'm NOT willing to take. My life is so much better without alcohol or drugs.

As an addict, always looking for a quick fix, why does recovery seem to take so long?

When I was active in my addiction it consumed my life 24/7, 365 days a year. It never took weekends, nights or holidays off. Why should recovery be any different? I spent around two hours every day working on my recovery, an hour exercising, thirty minutes meditating, and thirty minutes reading or learning something new.

This doesn't include all the time I spend advocating or mentoring others. Recovery is a way of life for me a way of being present in the world. Being willing to examine my behavior and change what's no longer serving me.

If there's anything I can do to help you in your recovery or have any further questions please reach out to me gordiebufton@gmail.com or gordiebufton.com or any social media platforms. I look forward to hearing from you. We are the Creators of our Destiny.



Gordie has shared his story with tens of thousands of students and has spoken at over 85 different events. His passion is educating young people about the real dangers of substance abuse. He authentically shares his experience to inspire others to live into whatever their hearts desire and fulfill their dreams.

Eluding Reality: A Memoir about Drugs, Psych Wards, and

Recovery is available on Amazon at <http://www.amazon.com/Eluding-Reality-Memoir-about-Recovery-ebook>. To preview the **30 Day Video Series on Overcoming Addiction** visit <https://www.avanoo.com/spa/corp/#/first3/470>



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The River Source launches Women-Only Residential Program

One of Arizona's leading drug and alcohol addiction recovery centers, The River Source, has announced the opening of an all-new residential treatment program that specifically caters to women. The new rehab program is located in downtown Mesa, the third-largest city in Arizona.

“We’re excited to offer our unique model of healing to an exclusively female audience,” said The River Source CEO Phill Westbrooks. “Studies show women are more likely to complete a treatment program within a single-gender environment. This program will allow us to provide some services not available at our co-ed adult residential facility in Arizona City.”

In addition to integrative medical detox and holistic therapy services, the program for women 18 years and up will include accommodations for pregnant mothers, as well as couples treatment and family therapy sessions.


The women-only treatment center features such amenities as a yoga ramada, dry sauna, basketball hoop, outdoor fire pit, lounge area with television, quiet seating areas, and beautiful desert landscaping.

"We chose the Mesa location because of its year-round warm weather, sunny skies and great views of the nearby mountains," Westbrook said. "Hiking excursions will be offered as

part of our holistic therapy services, since exercise is a key component of healing and recovery.”

The River Source accepts patients from all over the nation, offering customized recovery plans and treatment for co-occurring disorders. Located 20 minutes from Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport, the center will house clients for up to 90 days. The River Source also offers a recovery guarantee and full continuum of care, if any patient completes a 90-day program and relapses within one year. They can return for additional treatment free of charge.

Founded in 2003, The River Source also offers a co-ed addiction treatment at their residential treatment facility in Arizona City and co-ed intensive outpatient program at their outpatient facility near downtown Mesa. Learn more: www.riversource.org or call 888-687-7332.



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FREE Professional Networking Luncheon — Psychological Counseling Services (PCS) invites you to join us for a free networking luncheon experience from 12:15 pm to 1:45pm. Mark your calendar—**November 17**. If you have attended in the past, feel free to join us anytime. If you are new, please send your email request for an invitation to pcs@pcsearle.com or call 480-947-5739 to speak to Ellen Hamilton for details.

Every Monday— Scottsdale – FAMILY RECOVERY GROUP at The Meadows Outpatient Center. Facilitated by Brough Stewart, LPC. 5:30 -7:30 p.m. A group designed to help begin and continue family recovery. Stop enabling behaviors and learn how to set healthy boundaries based on Pia Melody's Model. **No reservations needed and no charge.** The Meadows Outpatient Center, 19120 N. Pima Road, Suite 125, Scottsdale. Contact: Jim Corrington LCSW, **602-740-8403**.

Nov. 16 and Dec. 21, 1:30 – 3 p.m. Alzheimer's Disease Caregiver Support Group — Pyle Adult Recreation Center, Multipurpose Room, 655 E. Southern Ave., Tempe. Join us to discuss challenges, successes and information about being a caregiver for someone with Alzheimer's disease. Facilitated by: Hank Zaremba. Presented by St. Lukes.

Every Week—Tucson – COTTONWOOD TUCSON – InnerPath Developing Healthy Families Workshop. Five-day workshop is for families impacted by addictions, psychiatric disorders, anger & rage, and trauma. Facilitated by Cottonwood staff. Visit www.cottonwoodtucson.com or call Jana at **520-743 2141** or email jmartin@cottonwoodtucson.com for information.

SIERRA TUCSON— Alumni Groups. Tuesdays 6:00- 7:00 p.m. Valley Presbyterian Church. 6947 E. McDonald Drive, Paradise Valley. 480-991-4267. Meet in the Counseling Center (Parlor Room). Park in west parking lot and follow signs to the Counseling Center, located in the chapel complex. For more information, please contact Rob L. at 602-339-4244 or STSCOTTSDALEALUMNI@GMAIL.COM

Continuing Care Groups in Phoenix. Wednesdays — for Family Member Alumni (18 years and over). (PCS) Psychological Counseling Services, 7530 E. Angus Drive, Scottsdale, 5:30 – 7:00 p.m. **Thursdays —** for Patient Alumni, PCS, 3302 N. Miller Road, Scottsdale, .5:30 – 7:00 p.m. Facilitated by the clinical staff of Psychological Counseling Services. No charge for Patient and Family Member Alumni.

Scottsdale— Support Groups for Alumni, Tuesdays, 6:00- 7:00 p.m. Valley Presbyterian Church, 6947 E. McDonald Drive, Paradise Valley,

(480-991-4267) Alumni meet in the Counseling Center (Parlor Room). Park in the west parking lot and follow signs to the Counseling Center, which is located in the chapel complex. For more information, contact Rob L. at 602-339-4244 or STSCOTTSDALEALUMNI@GMAIL.COM

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Tuesdays – Men's Anger Management Group addresses rage intervention strategies, healthy expression of anger, emotions education, trigger awareness. **Thursdays— Men's General Therapy Group** empowering work through blockages to living. Dennis Ryan, M.C., L.P.C. a602-381-8003. Every Thursday, 5 - 6:30 p.m., 6:30-8 p.m. Transformation Institute. 4202 N. 32nd St., Suite J, Phoenix, AZ 85018.

CHRONIC PAIN SUFFERERS "Harvesting Support for Chronic Pain," third Saturday of the month, 12 noon - 1 p.m. Harvest of Tempe Classroom, 710 W. Elliot Rd., Suite 103, Tempe. Contact Carol **480-246-7029**.

HOPE, STRENGTH, SUPPORT for Jewish Alcoholics, Addicts, and their Families and Friends (JACS*) 1st and 3rd Wednesday, 7:30 PM. Ina Levine Jewish Community Campus, 2nd floor Conference Room. 12701 N. Scottsdale Road, Scottsdale 85254. 602.971.1234 ext. 280 or at JACSari-

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PSA Behavioral Health "The Guild" Monday 5:30 -7:30 pm. A fun-filled, educational, supportive get-together. The Guild is open to the community and brings the community together in raising awareness of mental illness and recovery. PSA North, 2255 W. Northern Ave. in B109. Call Barbara 602-995-1967 x 207.

WAAT- Women's Association for Addiction Treatment Monthing meetings. November 17th: Speaker, Elisabeth Davies, December 15th: Christmas Party Paradise Bakery, 101 and Raintree. Sue Shipman 480-633-7292

COSA (12-step recovery program for men and women whose lives have been affected by another person's compulsive sexual behavior)— **Being in Balance.** Thursday 11:00 am-Noon. 2210 W. Southern Ave. Mesa, 85202. Information 602-793-4120.

WOMEN FOR SOBRIETY — www.womenforsobriety.org meeting every Saturday —10am-11:30am. All Saints of the Desert Episcopal Church-9502 W. Hutton Drive. Sun City, AZ 85351. Christy (602) 316-

5136

CO-ANON FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP - Carrying the message of hope and personal recovery to family members and friends of someone who is addicted to cocaine or other mind altering substances. **"Off the Roller-Coaster"** Meeting, Thursdays, 6:30 - 7:45pm, 2121 S. Rural Road, Tempe, Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church. Donna **602-697-9550** or Maggie **480-567-8002**

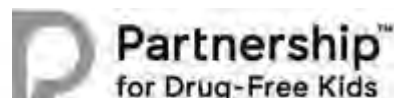
GAMBLERS ANONYMOUS — ACT Counseling & Education. 11:00 am to 12:30 pm. **602-569-4328** for details. 5010 E. Shea Blvd. D202, Phoenix.

INCEST SURVIVORS ANONYMOUS—North Scottsdale Fellowship Club, Saturdays, 1:30-2:30pm. Gloria, **602-819-0401**.

Alumni Meeting—COTTONWOOD TUCSON. Ongoing: First Wednesday of month 6:00-7:30 p.m. **Cottonwood campus in Tucson.** 4110 W. Sweetwater Drive. 5:00 p.m. dinner. Contact Jana Martin **520-743-2141** or email jmartin@cottonwoodtucson.com

continued page 13

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Is Your Addict Child Making You Crazy? 5 Ways Al-Anon Can Help

Shame and isolation are two unwelcome companions in the daily lives of parents of young addicts. There's the shame of having a child who is heading for "jail, not Yale." There's the shame of having intensely negative feelings about the child you love. And there's the shame of descending into dysfunctional parenting: enabling, screaming, lecturing, threatening and seething with resentment 24/7.

This abundance of shame tends to isolate parents. After all, what kind of parent wants to admit that their child is making them crazy? Or that they hate the kind of parent they've become?

Well-meaning friends offer parenting advice that would never work for a child who doesn't recognize or care about consequences. And because your friends have never been pushed to the brink by a child with out-of-control behavior — such as lying, stealing, punching holes in walls, getting arrested and being put on psychiatric holds — you're probably not comfortable telling them that you often feel you're losing your mind.

Walking alone in shame can have a terrible effect on your mental and physical health. And if you're feeling desperate and out of control, you're going to have a hard time helping your child — not to mention doing your job and focusing on the other relationships in your life.

Here are five ways the Al-Anon program can help you regain your sanity and start to enjoy life again:

- 1. Lack of judgment.** Where else can you stand up in front of a room full of people and say you're relieved your kid spent the weekend in jail because it bought you a few days of peace? And no one bats an eye? It's a relief to be able to speak freely and know that no one will judge you, your kid or your parenting.
- 2. Validation.** Newcomers often hear "you've come to the right place." No matter how bad you think your story is, every Al-Anon member has a similar story, or one that's even worse. Only

3.

- Boundary-setting.** Most parents of young addicts have trouble setting boundaries. They resort to inconsistent parenting, veering from enabling to empty threats. Al-Anon meetings are a great place to learn effective limit-setting techniques from more established members.

4.

- Get your life back.** You've come to Al-Anon because your life revolves around managing the chaos in your home. You spend so much energy putting out fires — confiscating drugs and weapons, calling 911, locking up your valuables, and more — that you've neglected your marriage, your other children, and you've forgotten how to have fun. Working the Al-Anon program can help you accept that you can't control the addict and learn to disengage from your worries about his or her outcome.

5.

- Have a sense of humor.** Living with an active addict, or worrying about one who's living on the street, is emotionally wrenching. When was the last time you laughed or felt that it was OK to laugh along with your heartache? You'll hear a lot of laughter in Al-Anon meetings. Members will assure you that nothing productive is gained by walking around with a dark cloud over your head. Having a sense of humor about the absurdity of it all can lift your spirits and give you the stamina to face what's coming your way.

Going to a 12-step program such as Al-Anon can give you the support you need to regain a sense of control over the most important person in your life: yourself. (Reprinted with permission Elements Behavioral Health.)



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What Is WAAT?

WAAT was formed in 2001. Six women gathered for lunch once a month with the purpose of sharing experience, support and knowledge in the field of addiction. The lunch meeting turned into a breakfast meeting and soon there were more and more women coming together for a common purpose. WAAT is a membership organization of professional women in the field of addiction. Membership is comprised of Psychologists, Licensed Clinical Social Workers, Marriage and Family Therapists, Addiction Specialists, Interventionists, Life Coaches,

Sober Living Owners, Treatment Center Owners, Marketers and more. Meetings are held monthly. WAAT offers a variety of speakers every other month, alternating with networking meetings. CEUs are offered for licensed MFTs and LCSWs in good membership standing. Professional development hours are available for CADCs.

Monthly meetings are held at Paradise Bakery on Raintree, near the 101 in Scottsdale. For information on how to participate contact Sue Shipman at 480-633-7292 or Email: sue@optimumbalancing.com

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National Synthetic Drug Crackdown Leads to Arrests

More than 100 people nationwide were arrested by federal drug agents in the latest phase of a crackdown on the manufacturing and distribution of synthetic drugs, the Associated Press reports.

The DEA and other state and federal agents arrested more than 150 people in 16 states since July 2014 in an operation that ended last Thursday.

Over \$15 million in cash and assets were seized by federal agents as part "Project Synergy," an ongoing effort by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) that aims to eliminate synthetic drugs.

The DEA has been focusing on synthetic drugs, including bath salts, Spice and Molly, since the drugs gained widespread popularity years ago. The agency is responsible for enforcing federal drug laws.

A bipartisan group of U.S. representatives has introduced a bill designed to combat the increasing

use of synthetic drugs. The bill would add more than 200 compounds to the list of Schedule I drugs, which are likely to be abused and have no medical uses.

"These drugs are, in my judgment, more serious than the drugs that are on the Controlled Substance Act, more dangerous," said bill co-sponsor Eleanor Holmes Norton, a Democrat who represents Washington, D.C.

"These are right out in the open. They're disguised in colored wrapping with snappy names to appeal to young people and children in particular. They are cheap. Much cheaper than the dangerous drugs like cocaine and heroin. They're sold everywhere. And drugs that are sold everywhere are presumed to be safe. They are openly marketed as an alternative to dangerous drugs and they have bizarre effects."



The National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence

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- **Healthy Connections for Moms-to-Be-Case Management and service referrals for pregnant women with addictions**

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ACOA (Adult Children of Alcoholics) Thursdays, 7:00 p.m., North Scottsdale United Methodist Church, 11735 N. Scottsdale Rd., Scottsdale. www.aca.arizona.org

ACA meeting. Tucson. Wed. 5:30-7:00 p.m. *Streams In the Desert Church* 5360 E. Pima Street. West of Craycroft. Classroom A (Follow the signs). Michael 520-419-6723.

Overeaters Anonymous - 12 Step program that deals with addictions to food and food behaviors. 18 meetings scheduled per week. For information 520-733-0880 or www.oasouthernaz.org.

Families Anonymous—12-step program for family members of addicted individuals. Phoenix/Scottsdale. 800-736-9805.

Pills Anonymous—Glendale Tues. 7:00-8:00 pm. HealthSouth Stroke Rehab 13460 N 67th Ave. (S. of Thunderbird) Education Room. Rosalie 602 540-2540. **Mesa** Tues. 7-8:00 pm, St. Matthew United Methodist Church. 2540 W. Baseline. B-14. Jim, 480-813-3406. Meggan 480-603-8892. **Scottsdale**, Wed. 5:30-6:30 pm, N. Scottsdale Fellowship, 10427 N. Scottsdale Rd., Room 3. Tom N. 602-290-0998. **Phoenix**, Thurs. 7-8:00 pm. First Mennonite Church 1612 W. Northern. Marc 623-217-9495, Pam 602-944-0834. Contact Janice 602-909-8937.

CELEBRATE RECOVERY—Chandler Christian Church. Weekly Friday meetings 7 p.m. Room B-200. For men and women dealing with chemical or sexual addictions, co-dependency and other **Hurts, Hang-ups and Habits**. 1825 S. Alma School Rd. Chandler. 480-963-3997. Pastor Larry Daily, email: larrydaily@chandlercc.org.

GA Meetings —ACT Counseling & Education. Phoenix/Glendale. **Tuesday, Spanish** (men) 7:00 -9:00 pm. 4480 W. Peoria Ave., Ste. 203, Glendale. **Thursday, Spanish** 7:00 - 9:00 pm 4480 W. Peoria Ave., Ste. 203, Glendale. **Sunday, Spanish** 6:00 - 8:00 pm 4480 W. Peoria Ave. Ste. 203, Glendale. **Sunday, English** 6:30 - 8:00 pm 5010 E. Shea Blvd., Ste. D-202, Contact Sue F. 602-349-0372

SAA www.saa-phoenix.org 602-735-1681 or 520-745-0775.

Tempe Valley Hope Alumni Support Groups, Thursdays 6-7:00 p.m., 2115 E. Southern Ave. Phoenix. Tues. 8-9:00 p.m., 3233 W. Peoria Ave. Ste. 203, Open to anyone in recovery.

Special Needs AA Meetings. Contact Cynthia SN/AC Coordinator 480-946-1384, email Mike at mphaes@mac.com

Survivors of Incest Anonymous. 12-step recovery for survivors. Tucson Survivors Meeting, Sundays 6:00 to 7:15pm. St. Francis in the Foothills,

Events continued next page

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Office of Problem Gambling	800-NEXTSTEP
Aurora Behavioral Health	623-344-4444
Carla Vista	480-612-0296
Calvary Addiction Recovery Center	602-279-1468
Carleton Recovery	928-642-5399
Celebrate Recovery with Chandler	
Christian Church	480-963-3997
Chandler Valley Hope	480-899-3335
Chapter 5	928-379-1315
Community Bridges	480-831-7566
CBI, Inc. Access to Care Line	877-931-9142
Cottonwood de Tucson	800-877-4520
Crisis Response Network	602-222-9444
The Crossroads	602-279-2585
Decision Point Center	928-778-4600
Dr. Marlo Archer	480-705-5007
Dr. Janice Blair	602-460-5464
Dr. Dina Evan	602-997-1200
Dr. Dan Glick	480-614-5622
Franciscan Renewal Center	480-948-7460
Gifts Anon	480-483-6006
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Geffen Liberman, LISAC	480-388-1495
The Meadows	800-632-3697
Millennium Labs	623-340-1506
NCADD	602-264-6214
North Ridge Counseling	877-711-1329
Pathway Programs	480-921-4050
Phoenix Metro SAA	602-735-1681
Promises	866-390-2340
Psychological Counseling Services	
(PCS)	480-947-5739
Remuda Ranch	800-445-1900
River Source-12 Step Holistic	480-827-0322
Sex/Love Addicts Anonymous	520-792-6450
Sierra Tucson	800-842-4487
Springboard Recovery	928-710-3016
Sundance Center	844-878-4925
Start Fresh	855-393-4673
St. Luke's Behavioral	602-251-8535
Teen Challenge of AZ	800-346-7859
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RESOURCE DIRECTORY LISTINGS EMAIL: aztogether@yahoo.com	

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4625 E. River Road (west of Swan). Carlos 520-881-3400

OA—Teen Meeting, Saturdays 4:00 p.m. 1219 E. Glendale Ave. #23 Phoenix. www.oaphoenix.org/602-234-1195.

SLAA—Sex and Love Addict Anonymous 602-337-7117. slaa-arizona.org

GAM-ANON: Sun. 7:30 p.m. Desert Cross Lutheran Church, 8600 S. McClintock, Tempe. Mon. 7:30 p.m., Cross in the Desert Church, 12835 N. 32nd St., Phoenix, Tues. 7:00 p.m., First Christian Church, 6750 N. 7th Ave., Phoenix, Tues. 7:15 p.m. Desert Cross Lutheran Church, Education Building, 8600 S. McClintock, Tempe, Thurs. 7:30 p.m.

DEBTORS Anonymous—Mon., 7-8:00 p.m., St. Phillip’s Church, 4440 N. Campbell Ave., Palo Verde Room. Thurs. 6-7:00 p.m., University Medical Center, 1501 N. Campbell. 520-570-7990, www.arizonada.org.

Effective Treatments for Long-Term Recovery From Addiction

By Elisabeth Davies, MC

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, 24.6 million Americans used illicit drugs in 2013. One in 10 were dependent on alcohol. Approximately 65% of those who did not struggle with addiction, were negatively affected by a family member’s addiction.

Addiction is a chronic brain disease causing a person to pathologically pursue reward or relief by using a substance or behavior. Their inability to abstain causes destructive consequences to their mental, physical and spiritual health, relationships, finances and life success. There is not a one treatment fits all remedy. A combination of treatments is the most effective recovery plan. The top nine treatments that have been shown to be effective include:

1. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy: Based on the idea a person’s thoughts cause their feelings and motivate their behaviors. Changing the way they think will change the way they feel, leading them to respond better, even if a situation does not change. In 2010 the National Institute of Health published a study showing approximately 60% of individuals diagnosed with a substance use disorder were able to remain abstinent for 52 weeks with Cognitive Behavioral Therapy.

2. Recovery Support Groups: Based on people in the group supporting the common goal of abstinence from drugs and alcohol. Some recovery support groups include Alcoholics Anonymous or 12 step groups, SMART Recovery, Rational Recovery, Women for Sobriety, and Celebrate Recovery. These groups provide opportunities to build healthy alliances and accountability. Research professor Dr. Scott Tonigan at the Center on Alcoholism, Substance Abuse, and Addictions says, “Having a group dynamic involved in your support system, is a critical piece of long-term recovery.”

3. Mindfulness: Teaches people with substance use disorders to create distance between their impulses and cravings, so they have a chance to change their behavior. Mindfulness is deliberately paying attention, non-judgmentally so they can be aware of what is present for them mentally and physically each moment. The National Center for Biotechnology Information published research in 2009 showing Mindfulness interrupts the tendency to respond using maladaptive behaviors such as unhealthy substances.

4. Meditation: We shut out the external world and bring our attention to the breath. Alpha brain wave activity increases creating a wakeful rest state. One of the techniques in meditation is to be able to allow thoughts, feelings and sensations to arise while maintaining a non-judgmental, detached attitude. This practice decreases the effect ‘using thoughts’ have that can make a person who struggles with addiction vulnerable to relapse. Dr. David Simon, author of *Freedom from Addiction* says, “Daily meditation decreases relapses.”

5. Nutrition/Exercise: Critical for biochemical balance in the body. Poor nutrition, stress, exposure to toxins and genetic vulnerabilities are the top four risk factors that usually result in compulsive substance use. Dr. Charles Gant, author of *End Your Addiction Now*, says, “Eating natural foods and exercising 30 minutes a day treats 3 of the 4 risk factors.”

6. Body Work: Based on the belief that your emotional history is stored in your body. Therapeutic massage, Acupuncture, Reiki, Somatic Experiencing, and a Sensory Deprivation Chamber are all body treatments that help release stored emotional trauma and abuse. Dr. Pat Ogden, author of *Trauma and the Body* says, “Body work manipulates your body to help relieve the cravings and other symptoms associated with compulsive behaviors so that the person does not seek substances and compulsive behaviors to soothe uncomfortable emotions.”

7. Journaling: Develops a person’s creative, personal and emotional process. Journaling can be used as a written emotional expression to clear the mind, deepen self-reflection and gain more perspective. It allows a person struggling with addiction to track their recovery progress. Writing down distressing thoughts and experiences helps relieve negative emotions, rather than using substances or unhealthy behaviors to cope. *The Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment* published research in 1999 stating, “Clients who used journaling as a treatment reported lower values for craving intensity and a decrease in substance use.”

8. Self-Respect: Pride and confidence in ones integrity, a feeling that they are behaving with honor and dignity. One symptom every person struggling with an addiction has in common is they do not unconditionally love themselves. Ways to build self-respect include, not being self-critical, not allowing other people to mistreat them, recognizing their individual talents and abilities, forgiving their mistakes, encouraging themselves to reach their goals. A persons choices are a direct reflection of the value they have for themselves. When a person respects the gift of life , they will make choices that do not destroy it.

9. Spirituality: Increasing the qualities of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. This can be done by asking Spirit -Creator of all life to fill them with spiritual qualities, using their breath and intention to focus on expanding spiritual qualities within them, and consciously practicing spiritual responses in their daily life. According to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse, spirituality focused addiction treatment programs have resulted in up to 10 percent greater abstinence rates than non-spiritual forms of treatment.

When people with an addiction make a commitment to stop using unhealthy substances and behaviors, combining these nine effective treatments will support them in long-term recovery. Treatment and sobriety will enhance their mental, physical and spiritual health, their relationships and their ability to have a successful life.



Elisabeth Davies, MC, holds a master's degree in counseling and has been a counselor since 1989. Her private practice, Bright Alternatives, Inc. is located in Peoria, AZ. She counsels people in managing addiction, anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, trauma, abuse, and relationship problems. Elisabeth is the author of *Good Things Emotional Healing Journal: Addiction*. (602) 867-6988

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