

# Together AZ



MARCH 2016

Inspiring Success on the Road to Recovery

AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FOR ALL PARENTS FROM THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF YOUTH, FAITH and FAMILY



## Keeping Them Safe

By *Deborrah Miler, MEd.*

When Governor Doug Ducey announced the appointment of Debbie Moak as director of the Governor's Office of Youth, Faith and Family (GOYFF) last year, he began a new direction for the State in addressing Substance Abuse Prevention, Treatment and Recovery. "Every one of us knows someone who has experienced or been impacted by substance abuse or addiction," said Governor Ducey. "If we're going to be successful in our efforts to combat this disease, we must remove the stigma and eliminate community denial about what addiction is and who it affects. It's time to turn the discussion to prevention, early intervention and treatment."

As Director of GOYFF, Debbie Moak brings 16 years of experience working with parents and youth regarding substance abuse. She and her staff, took Governor Ducey's message, and developed a family guide, "Keep Them Safe" to assist parents with beginning the conversation with their youth regarding prevention and early intervention of substance use.

Ms. Moak is a mother who faced her own son's addiction. As the co-founder of the non-

profit organization, [www.notMYkid.org](http://www.notMYkid.org), Ms. Moak created prevention-based programs for six behavioral health issues facing children, including substance abuse, bullying, dating violence, internet safety, depression and eating disorders. Additionally, Ms. Moak has personally presented substance abuse education programs to thousands of parents and faculties in Arizona, as well as several other states and internationally in Scotland, Thailand and Guatemala. She has spearheaded two national annual awareness campaigns educating hundreds of thousands of adults and their children in cities across the United States.

"One of the most important things that any parent will do this year is to prevent their child from using drugs," stated Ms. Moak. She wants parents to know that they have the ability to prevent drug use. With the practical education, communication skills and recognizing the warning signs of substance abuse, parents really can prevent drug use from occurring in their child's life. While it's not always easy to talk with children and teens, the time and effort invested now is much easier than a lifetime of addiction.

Prevention is the only 100% safe and effective treatment.

Parents need to talk with their children often. "I think we need to be open, but at the same time age appropriate," Ms. Moak said. "Make sure the conversations stay focused on the child, not you." Ninety percent of all addiction occurs because of what happens during the teen years. That's the statistic parents really need to hear, says Ms. Moak. She also advises parents not to wait until a crisis to intervene in their child's life. That is why our office has developed the "Keep Them Safe" brochure and the Family Prevention Substance Abuse Plan; we want to provide the tools necessary for parents to have a successful, realistic conversation and plan to address substance use and abuse. With a plan, open and on-going dialogue, we need to prevent first substance use.

### Talk to Each Other

Good communication between parents and children is the foundation of strong families. By developing good communication skills, parents can often catch problems early, support positive behavior and stay involved with their children's lives. Talking with your child about substance use should be a process, not a single event. New opportunities and temptations are on-going and, unfortunately, with increasing frequency as your child enters adolescence and the teenage years. "You are your child's most important role model and their best defense against substance abuse. Start early and answer the questions about drugs before they are asked," said Moak. Research shows that children who hear the facts about drugs and alcohol from their parents are significantly less likely to use them.

Parents are often reluctant to start this conversation, so how does a parent address or begin the conversation? Parents need to gather their thoughts before approaching their sons or daughters, says Moak. They should have a plan to keep the conversation going, be honest and rational, and be completely clear that you do not want them using drugs and alcohol. Moak suggests that parents be calm and patient; control your thoughts and actions; listen with respect; avoid lengthy responses that may be perceived as a lecture; repeat what your child has said to be sure you understand what your child is saying; and if necessary, take a break and come back to the conversation at a planned later time.

Children feel more comfortable bringing issues and situations to their parents when they know

KEEPING THEM SAFE *continued page 2*

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# What are the risk factors?

Individuals are more likely to act in risky behaviors such as alcohol, tobacco, or drugs if their life includes:

- Peers who use drugs and tolerate abuse
- Insufficient social skills
- First use at early age
- Low self-esteem
- Exposure to drugs in the community
- Family history of substance abuse
- Economic disadvantage
- Perception of use as the norm
- Chaotic home environment
- Perception of low risk associated with alcohol or drug use
- Undefined rules and poor communication

Average age of first use:



12 to 13  
years old



## Warning signs

- Bloodshot eyes, dilated pupils, using eye drops to hide them
- Declining grades, skipping or suddenly getting in trouble at school
- Dropping friends for another group, being secretive about new peers
- Sleeping excessively or at unusual times
- Losing interest in old hobbies, lying about new activities and interests
- Locking doors, sneaking around, avoiding eye contact, demanding more privacy
- Family home missing money, prescriptions or valuables

**Key risk** periods are during major transitions which may include moving to a different school, facing new social and academic challenges, and leaving school for work or college. Transitional years from elementary school to middle school, middle school to high school and high school to college are among the key risk periods.

**Red flags** of substance abuse are different from normal teenage ups & downs.



KEEPING THEM SAFE from page 1

they will be heard and not accused. Listening means paying special attention to what is said, both verbally and non-verbally.

### Why is it difficult for parents to open up this conversation?

Many parents are hesitant to start the conversation because they are afraid that they'll be asked about their own prior drug use, says Moak. Despite their intentions to convey anti-substance-use messages, parent's discussion of their prior use may in some ways downplay the emphasis on the negative consequences of using substances. Knowing that their parents tried substances may actually normalize this behavior for youth and make it seem okay, thereby making youth think their parents wouldn't really disapprove of them using substances and thinking that more kids around them do use.

Moak suggested these strategies to use when your child asks about your past:

In your child's world, drugs are readily available and much more powerful than the ones you experimented with when you were young. Your focus should be with what your child is facing, and how you can assist them. Keep the conversation centered on them and the dangers of today's drugs. Get educated on the drugs that may be around your youth today and use the correct terms or slang they may hear.

### *"Talking with your child about substance use should be a process, not a single event."*

In short, stay credible.

You should say something like, "The thing that matters is what lies ahead of you, not what is in the past. I want to help you focus on what drugs can do to you and your future." Or, "The past has taught me some valuable lessons, but we're not going to focus on me, we're going to focus on your future and what you can achieve by not using drugs."

Avoid giving your child more information than she or he asked for, you can say too much. You should say something like, "Everybody makes mistakes. Using drugs is a big one. Nothing good comes from drug use. I love you too much to watch you make bad decisions." Or, "Drugs affect everyone differently. Even if drugs didn't ruin my life, I've seen them ruin other people's lives. And I don't want you to be someone whose life was ruined by drugs."

It's a parent's job to use love and experience to correct mistakes and poor choices. By using a mix of praise and criticism, you can correct your child's behavior without saying your child is bad. This helps children build self-confidence and learn how to make healthy and safe choices. In time, making smart choices, on their own will become easier. You should

say something like. "Do you ever feel pressure to try drugs?"

Ms. Moak also suggests parents find out what their children already know. Ask your child, what have you heard about drugs at school or from your friends? Be sure to educate yourself, so you will be able to answer their questions. Remember, if you don't know the answer, don't guess. These discussions do not need to be long. Being clear about your expectations and asking your children's opinions can take only a few moments. Boundaries help a child feel secure, loved and supported.

By using any opportunity to have a conversation, Ms. Moak believes that parents can easily take advantage of "teachable moments" to discuss drug use with their child. Teachable moments can happen while driving in the car, at the dinner table while discussing a situation at school or a current event in the news. If you see a character in a movie or on TV with a cigarette, talk about smoking addiction, and what smoking does to a person's body. This can lead into a discussion about other drugs and how they could cause harm. News, such as steroid use in professional sports, can be springboards for casual conversations about current events. Texting is

an increasingly popular way for parents to communicate with their children. Send positive text messages to your child or follow up a conversation with a text that reinforces what you just talked about. Use these discussions to give your children information about the risks of drugs.

Monitoring your child's activity is also very important says Moak. Research shows that children whose parents use effective monitoring practices are less likely to make poor decisions. Monitoring should start in early childhood and continue throughout the teen years. Know where your teen goes and who he or she hangs out with. Talk with your child about how he or she spends time or whether he or she is making safe choices. It's also important to routinely check potential hiding places for drugs—in backpacks, between books on a shelf, make-up cases, or light switches, etc.

Moak suggests that parents encourage other interests and social activities; look for ways to get your child involved in sports, hobbies, school clubs, and other activities that reduce boredom and excess free time. Encourage positive friendships and interests, and look for activities that you and your child can do together. Helping youth engage in positive extra-curricular activities can pay lifelong benefits.

Talk to your child about underlying issues. Drug use can be the

# What can parents do?



**Use any opportunity to have a conversation. Take advantage of “teachable moments” to discuss drug use with your child.**



Spend at least 15 minutes each day doing something your child wants to do, like talking, cooking a meal together, playing a game, or doing a craft project your child chooses. Spend an uninterrupted hour a week, one day a month and two consecutive days a year building a strong, positive relationship with your child.

**“A child who reaches age 21 without smoking, abusing alcohol or using drugs is virtually certain to never do so.”**

— Joseph A. Califano

**Teachable moments can happen while driving in the car, at the dinner table, and while discussing a situation at school or a current event in the news.**

- Monitor your child’s activity.
- Encourage other interests and social activities.
- Talk to your child about underlying issues.
- Spend time together and get to know their friends and their friends’ parents.
- Set clear standards and expectations around all types of substance abuse.
- **ASK FOR HELP.**

## Two-Way Conversations

Remember that communication is a two-way street that involves both talking and listening.



### Parents might ask children:

- Why do you think some kids drink or use drugs and what do you feel about that?
- What do you think or feel when you see an adult drinking or smoking?

### Kids might ask:

- Why do you or other adults sometimes drink or smoke?
- Why is it okay for you/them but not for me?

result of other problems says Moak. Is your child having trouble fitting in? Children need to learn that doing something they know is wrong is not a good way to “fit in” or feel accepted by others. Has there been a recent major change, like a move or divorce, which is causing stress? If your child has the confidence, assertiveness, and strength to handle tough times, he or she will be less likely to try drugs, alcohol, and tobacco to feel better or to please friends.

Additionally, Ms. Moak is an advocate for using home drug test kits as a prevention or early intervention tool. These can help to deter first use and relieve some of the peer pressure placed on our youth. This can be one additional tool in a parents’ toolbox to protect their youth today.

Spend time with your child and get to know their friends and their friends’ parents. Children who feel a close bond with a parent or other adult are less likely to want to disappoint them. Encourage your child to be an independent thinker, praise them for having the courage to resist peer pressure and make wise choices. The more parents and other family members get involved in children’s lives, the more positive they will feel about themselves and the more likely they will be to respond favorably to their parents.

Set clear standards and expectations around all types of substance

abuse. Family rules about substance abuse give children something to fall back on when they are tempted to make poor decisions. Provide your child with words and strategies to use to remove themselves from situations where they are offered drugs. Here are some examples of rules that parenting experts recommend: **“If you’re at a party and you see that drugs or alcohol are being used, the rule is to leave that party. Call me and I’ll come and get you.”** **“I don’t want you using alcohol, tobacco or drugs.”** **“I love you and I want the best for you, so I don’t want you using marijuana or any other drug.”**

Parents should not feel they need to do this on their own or alone, says Moak, ask for help. Raising children is complicated, and you may need help. Consider taking a parenting class or going to a family counselor. Hospitals and community centers often offer such classes.

In addition to the **“Keep Them Safe”** brochure and the Family Prevention Substance Abuse Plan, GOYFF has launched a website, [www.SubstanceAbuse.az.gov](http://www.SubstanceAbuse.az.gov). This website provides a Locator for use by anyone seeking help with prevention, treatment and recovery resources. By clicking on the Prevention, Treatment or Recovery box at the top of the site, and providing an Arizona zip code, users can find numerous state agencies and non-profits that can assist with

their specific needs.

By utilizing the education tools and strategies provided in the **“Keep Them Safe”** brochure, as well as completing the Family Substance Abuse Prevention Plan, both parents and youth can make good decisions in the future to avoid substance use. As Joseph Califano once stated, **“A child who reaches the age of 21 without smoking, using illegal drugs or abusing alcohol is virtually never to do so.”**



Debbie Moak as Director of the Governor’s Office of Youth, Faith and Family (GOYFF).

*In February 2015, Governor Doug Ducey announced the appointment of Debbie Moak as Director of the Governor’s Office of Youth, Faith and Family (GOYFF).*

*Debbie is co-founder of the non-profit organization, NotMYkid and for more than three decades, has been doing exceptional work to educate, inspire and empower youth, families and communities in Arizona.*

Ms. Moak stated, “For me, that’s the goal. I wish I had the opportunity to go back and get this right, but I don’t. Many of you reading this still have the opportunity to get this right.”

The Governor’s Office of Youth, Faith and Family is committed to instilling a proactive approach to teen and parenting issues by raising awareness through educational programs like **“Keep Them Safe”**.

***You are your child’s most important role model and their best defense against substance abuse.***



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# Hot Topics

## Nonmedical Use of Adderall on the Rise Among Young Adults

Nonmedical use of Adderall, a medication used to treat attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), rose 67 percent among young adults between 2006 and 2011, a new study finds. The number of emergency room visits involving misuse of the drug among 18- to 25-year-olds also rose during this period, **NPR** reports.

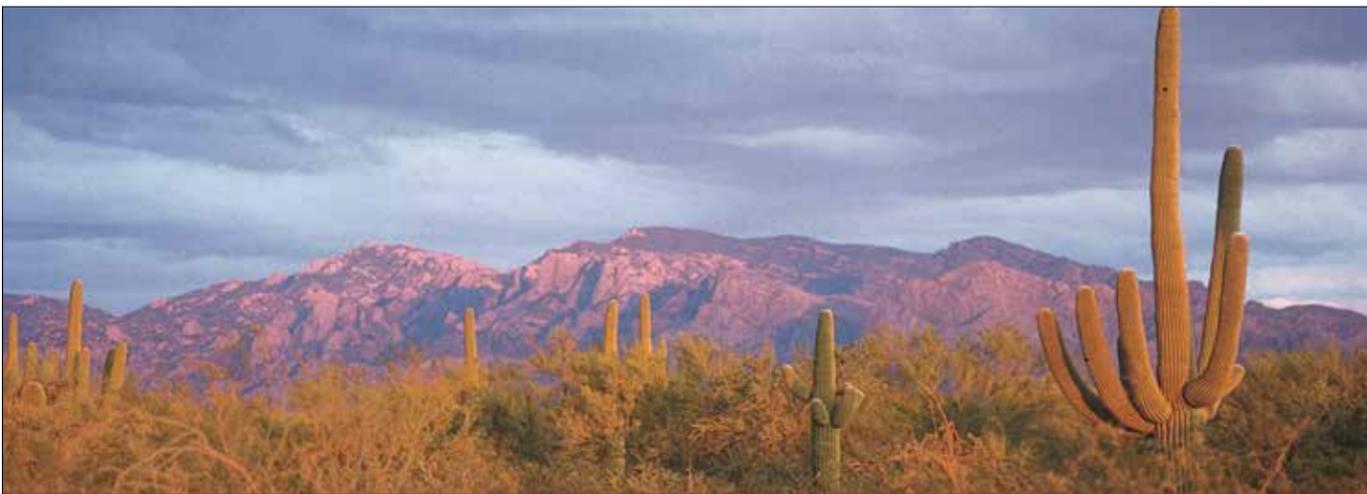


The number of ER visits related to Adderall among this age group rose from 862 visits in 2006 to 1,489 in 2011. During this period the number of prescriptions for the drug remained unchanged among young adults.

ER visits associated with the ADHD drug Ritalin rose only slightly among young adults between 2006 and 2011, the researchers found. Nonmedical use of Ritalin was much lower than misuse of Adderall.

Researchers from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health said in many cases, young adults who misuse ADHD drugs get them from a friend or family member who has been prescribed the pills. They may

HOT TOPICS cont'd page 10



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## Publisher's Note

By Barbara Nicholson-Brown

# Changing the Conversation

Our feature story, "Keeping Them Safe" is part of the campaign on family awareness through the Governor's Office of Youth, Faith and Family. It's no secret drugs are stealing the lives of young people every day. Switch on any news channel and horrifying stories are filling the airwaves. *There are solutions, beginning with opening the doors of conversation.*

The stigma attached to drug and alcohol abuse is still a factor deterring many from discussing the problem. Think of it this way — if opening up and talking about it meant not having to lose a child, neighbor or friend— isn't that conversation worth everything meaningful in the world?

Of course springing a serious conversation on your kids may make them feel ambushed and defensive. Give them a heads up before hand and make sure to be clear about what the conversation will entail, so everyone in the family can be on the same page.

"Tomorrow night let's have a talk about drinking and drugs. You're not in trouble. I just want to talk about where we stand and hear any concerns you might be having."

### Get Help

I personally recommend every parent visit [www.SubstanceAbuse.az.gov](http://www.SubstanceAbuse.az.gov). This informative website provides a locator for anyone seeking help with prevention, treatment and recovery resources. By clicking on the **Prevention, Treatment or Recovery** box at the top of the site, and providing an Arizona zip code, where users can find numerous state agencies and non-profits that can assist with their specific needs.

Together, we can remove the elephant from the room, we can acknowledge the problems we face and find solutions for strong and healthy families. The biggest step is asking for help and there should not be any fear of judgment in that.

My heart felt thanks goes out to the team from the Governor's Office of Youth, Faith and Family; Ms. Debbie Moak, Deborah Miller, Tonya Hamilton and Sam Burba for providing our readers with this important information.

And, throughout the year, *Together AZ* will be working closely with the GOYFF on a continuing basis to bring you updates and ways you can find solutions for your family and those you care about. One sure way to pay it forward is keeping the conversation going

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By Alan Cohen

# Seven Doorways Out of Guilt

**D**o you suffer from guilt? Do you impose guilt on others? Nearly every religion, family, and belief system plays on guilt to keep its adherents in line. Yet there are ways to escape from the prison of guilt. Here are the top seven, along with practical applications to become free.

## 1. Know that guilt is not natural

No human being is born with guilt. Guilt is entirely learned, passed down from generation to generation like a dark, heavy, ill-fitting cloak. Innocence, freedom, and inner peace are our natural state. All else is an anomaly to our true essence. Genuine happiness abides within you, you deserve it, and it is your destiny.

Take a moment to recall a time in your life, when you were very young, before you learned to feel guilty. Or when you were older and for a brief time you rose above the clouds of judgment. How did you feel? Can you remember the freedom and aliveness you experienced? Even if you capture a moment of such a feeling, you have a key to your natural state. Practice such feelings as often as you can, and tilt the balance of your life from learned guilt to original innocence.

## 2. Identify every moment as a choice between fear and love.

Every thought you think, word you speak, and action you take proceeds from either love or fear. Peace and upset, innocence and guilt, healing and illness all spring from that one fundamental choice.

If you become upset or face a challenging situation, ask yourself, *"What is the voice of fear or guilt saying to me now?"* Clearly identify the words and energy of the critical voice. Then ask, *"What would the voice of kindness and encouragement say to me by contrast?"* When you recognize the experiential difference between the harsh demanding voice and the gentle releasing voice, you will see clearly what to do and how to live.

## 3. Release yourself from guilt by not casting it upon others.

When you hold someone else in the prison of

your judgments, you must sit at the door of his cell to make sure he doesn't escape. When you judge others, you become susceptible to judgments, your own and theirs. When you release others from the burden of your judgments, you release yourself.

Consider one person you judge, and identify the trait or action for which you judge that person. Notice the feelings your judgment generates within you. At such a moment you are as far from peace as you could possibly be. Now imagine releasing that person from your judgment. For a moment, suspend your upset. Notice the freedom you experience. All that you give, you give to yourself.

## 4. Reframe experiences in your favor.

You can choose to see any situation from a viewpoint that brings you peace rather than misery. The facts do not change, but your perspective does, along with your experience.

One night while watching a video with some friends at their home, I went into the kitchen to make some tea. Not finding a tea kettle, I poured water into a glass coffee carafe and placed it over a gas flame. I returned to the living room, and a minute later smelled something burning. We ran into the kitchen to find that the plastic handle of the carafe had caught fire. Quickly I put the fire out. Terribly embarrassed, I turned to my host and told him, "Sorry about that."

He smiled and replied, "I didn't know you were such a good fireman!" I was judging myself for starting the fire, and my friend was complimenting me for putting it out. Same situation, entirely different perspective, which led to an entirely different experience. While we cannot always choose the situations we encounter, we can choose whether to regard them with guilt or innocence. Therein lies our true power and freedom.

Take an experience about which you feel guilty, or one for which you consider someone else guilty, and choose another perspective that feels better. Interpret the event in your favor rather than using it to drag you or the other person down.

## 5. Quit beating yourself up for your past.

The only place the past lives is in your mind. The events that occurred matter less than how you think about them now. We've all made mistakes. What we do with them determines our current experience. If you keep going over your mistakes, they rule your life. If you bless them for your learning and find ways to look at them that bring you peace, they become your friend.

Consider a mistake you keep berating yourself for. What did you learn from this experience? How has it served you or others? Is there another way of looking at it that will help you move on with your life?

## 6. Let joy be your compass.

Your happiness does not detract from the good of others; it only adds to it. When you are at peace with yourself, you uplift everyone you meet by the energy you express. Keep choosing in harmony with your joy, and you will attract success for yourself and stimulate others to achieve theirs. Consider a choice that would truly make you happy. How will this choice bless and serve others rather than removing their good?

## 7. Redefine success as inner peace.

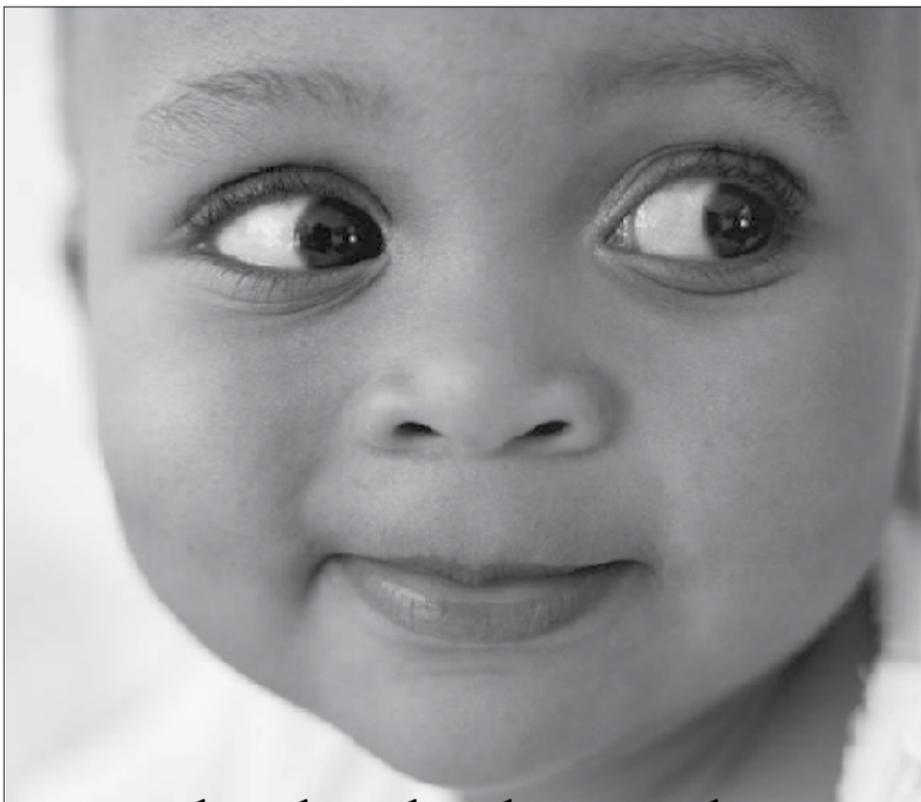
Most of the ways we have been taught to attain success make us miserable. Yet the only real measure of success is inner peace. When you are happy inside, you fulfill your purpose in life.

Notice what you are doing in the name of success that is making you unhappy. If you were to make inner peace your top priority, what you would quit doing? What would you do more of?

We have come to the point in human evolution when we are ready to leave guilt behind and claim the gifts of our natural innocence. You can lead others to freedom by claiming your own.



Alan Cohen is the author of many inspirational books, including the new groundbreaking *A Course in Miracles Made Easy: Mastering the Journey from Fear to Love*. For more information about this program visit [www.AlanCohen.com](http://www.AlanCohen.com).



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# LIFE 101

By COACH CARY BAYER [www.carybayer.com](http://www.carybayer.com)

## Groundhog Day & Reincarnation

As I write this piece, it's February 2, Groundhog Day, and I'm doing what I've done for umpteenth Groundhog Days before this one—watching Harold Ramis's comic spiritual masterpiece, *Groundhog Day*. What makes this comedy by the director of *Caddyshack*, *National Lampoon's Vacation*, and *Analyze This* a spiritual film? The biggest reason: it's a funny romantic metaphor for reincarnation. More on this later, but first the plot.

Phil Connors, egocentric acerbic weatherman for a Pittsburgh television station, portrayed by uber wise guy Bill Murray, is transformed on Groundhog Day in Punxsutawney, PA, where the annual event has been occurring for 130 years. Everyone experiences the festivities in one day but for him that day keeps on going many times over. It's a Capra-esque/Serling-esque picture—think *It's a Wonderful Life* meets *The Twilight Zone*.

When Murray's character wakes up on February 3, it's still February 2 for everyone, but he soon knows exactly what will happen when it will happen because he keeps living the same day. For him there's no tomorrow, just eternal February 2. He tells his producer Rita (Andie MacDowell) that he's a god. She forgets this the following "day," as does everyone else who forgets everything that he does.

### Beyond Karma

He soon discovers that he can do anything he wants without facing lasting consequences; in other words, he's transcended karma. So after the frustration of living the same day fades, he hedonistically indulges in sensual pleasures like gluttony, lust, and greed. After tiring of this, he falls into despair and attempts to kill himself many times, only to wake up the next day safely just where he was "the day before" at 6 AM with Sonny and Cher singing *"I Got you Babe"* on his clock radio alarm.

In time, he becomes attracted to his producer, who he previously dismissed for her apple pie view of life. He spends "day" after day learning what she loves to manipulate his chances at carnal pleasure. He learns piano and French, but all to no avail. On one date, she

says, "It's a perfect day. You couldn't plan a day like this." To which he replies, "Well, you can. It just takes an awful lot of work."

As his love for her grows, his concern for humanity grows, as well. In "time," with each new "incarnation," he becomes a kind of saint-like hero, treating a homeless beggar who he knows will die that night to a bountiful lunch; he repeatedly saves a boy falling out of a tree; and performs Heimlich on a choking diner every "day."

### Reincarnation: Life as a Do-Over

Those who believe in reincarnation see it as a way in which the Universe offers a giant do-over. You can indulge any desire you choose, do anything you choose, and you'll keep coming back to Earth in a new body, says this doctrine, until you discover the deeper meaning of existence. In other words, until you get it right. The "it" is the realization that you are, in fact, an undying eternal Spirit. The experience of this fact is known in spiritual circles as Enlightenment, Awakening, or Nirvana. It's the release from the wheel of karma and the cycle of life after death after life that we call reincarnation.

In the case of Groundhog Day, Murray's weatherman doesn't actually gain Self-Knowledge, but he does learn true love, a Hollywood metaphor for the more sublime consciousness that the Buddha taught. The Murray character has a major shift in consciousness; what was once an arrogant know-it-all, firmly rooted in his ego, has softened to become someone who genuinely cares about everyone. He becomes the most beloved person in town. And he treats Rita like the Bodhisattvas of Buddhism treat humanity—prioritizing her happiness over his own, the way they're dedicated to the awakening of all others, even before that of their own. When he truly loves her more than anything else, his spell is broken, just like in the fairy tales, and when he wakes up it's finally February 3. He's liberated from an endless February 2, and he's metaphorically liberated from having to come back. He has found that life is worth living and loving.



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# Embrace it All

By Dr. Dina Evan

*“I love the truth that sometimes **it’s not my circus and therefore, not my monkey.** The awareness that we each get to learn at our own pace, in our own way is freeing. I respect that and know it’s not my job to fix anyone. My job is simply to be truly present....”*

In my twenties, while sitting in an old Italian restaurant, I noticed a couple of people wandering around from table to table. One was selling roses and the other a fortune teller, dressed as a gypsy, who eventually approached our table. She quietly saddled up beside each of us and when she got to me, one thing I still remember that she said, “You will have a long life. You will live to be 76.” Something inside resonated with that. On the 12th of this month, I turn seventy-four.

In 74 years, you learn a lot, especially what you love and what you don’t. I hate injustice, the misuse of power, the inequality of women and minorities and kale. I love life and the lessons I created this time around. As you become less able to jump off tall buildings and solve the world’s greatest problems, you start smiling quietly inside about the things you love, for instance, my sixty-year-old toy poodle, Gracie.

Years ago, I learned from the love of my life that food can be satisfying and not just fuel. Hence, I have no shame having just finished the other half of the very satisfying hamburger that I couldn’t eat last night...and it’s only ten am. Stopping to savor the taste is now next in importance to great sex. I love non-slip socks and slippers. I love lingering hugs, an occasional Diet Pepsi and popcorn. Most of all I love learning.

In a close second, is my cashmere coat, my down quilt and my car with bells and whistles.

And then there is the soul work, the gifts you can’t touch or live without. I treasure the many truths I have learned and look forward to sharing with you. The kind that sear a path up your spine and rattle your teeth, such as there really is life after death and the, albeit over-used, truth that I create my own reality. I love the truth that sometimes it’s not my circus and therefore, not my monkey. The awareness that we each get to learn at our own pace, in our own way is freeing. I respect that and know it’s not my job to fix anyone. My job

is simply to be truly present, offer the best of what I have to offer, and then it’s not my business what people do with it.

As you get older you may realize that life cannot be categorized, compartmentalized or even tidy. Life is messy and marvelous. It’s filled with opportunities to accept differences, learn about your own willingness to grow and change and most importantly find your true self.

If you edit and judge avoid and parse from life only things you agree with, you will have missed the point. Be fearless and open. There is no one standing behind you making you believe anything. However, the more you understand another’s truth and how and why that truth is true for him or her, the more your respect and acceptance of that person will grow...even if you disagree.

For instance, my oldest daughter is a Jehovah’s Witness. She left my life, her brother and sister at age eighteen. It broke my heart not to know my grandchildren or hold my daughter. Nevertheless, as I told her, “You are doing exactly what I taught you to do which is live your beliefs and therefore I can respect and love you even if it hurts.”

One of the things I value the most is the truth that life is never just this or that. It’s all of it. There is a bit of truth in every lie. There is a bit of pain in every joy. There is a gift in the center of every challenge. At this age I offer you that truth so that you, more quickly than I, can stand arms and heart wide open bravely unafraid to let all of life in.



*Dr. Evan specializes in relationships, personal and professional empowerment, compassion and consciousness. 602-997-1200, email [DrDinaEvan@cox.net](mailto:DrDinaEvan@cox.net) and [www.DrDinaEvan.com](http://www.DrDinaEvan.com).*



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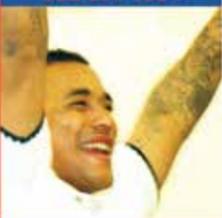
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# When Growing Up Hurts: How Parental Addiction Impacts Kids

Dr. Tian Dayton, Clinical Psychologist and author

Who we are speaks louder than what we say. Our facial and body language, the quality of our touch and the emotion and intent emanating from our expressions communicate more to the small child than words ever could. Expressions, sounds, and gestures, according to Stanley Greenspan (1999)—author of *Building Healthy Minds*—are our first forms of communication. Along with holding and touching, these form an intricate and attuned relational language that carries deep meaning and intention. These non-verbal forms of communication shape our very humanness and our capacity for intimacy (Greenspan, 1999) at barely conscious levels that we carry with us into all of our relating. We cannot Google our way into this intimacy; it needs to be a felt, sensed and shared experience. We need face-to-face, real-life encounters so that we can develop the subtle, non verbal ability to read and exchange subtle messages and meta communications that inform and inspire who we become on the inside and template our capacity for constructive rather than destructive forms of connection and closeness.

Neuroception, is a term coined by Stephen Porges (2011), former Director of the Brain-Body Center at the University of Illinois at Chicago, to describe our innate ability to use intricate, meaning-laden, barely perceptible mind-body signals to establish bonds and communicate our needs and intentions. While many of these communications are conscious, still more occur beneath the level of our awareness. (PORGES, 2011).

Neuroception is a system that has evolved over time to enable humans and mammals to establish the mutually nourishing bonds that we need to survive and thrive. It is also our personal security system that assesses, in the blink of an eye, whether or not the situations that we're encountering are safe or in some way threatening (Porges, 2004). According to Porges (2004), our neuroception tells us if we can relax and be ourselves or if we need to self protect. If the signals that we're picking up from others are cold, dismissive, or threatening, that system sets off an inner alarm that is followed by a cascade of mind-body responses honed by eons of evolution to keep us from being harmed. This mind-body system sets off equivalent alerts if we're facing the proverbial savor-toothed tiger or savor-toothed parent, older sibling, school bully, or spouse. When we feel threatened by another person's behavior, we brace for harm, whether it's harm to our person on the inside or the outside.

## Chaos in the Home

Neuroception allows us to regulate ourselves within the context of relationships. Self regulation is one of our basic, developmental tasks. In trauma engendering families, "people are not able to use their interactions with others to regulate their physiological states in relationship . . . they are not getting anything back from the other person that can help them to remain calm and regulated. Quite the opposite, the other person's behavior is making them go into a scared, braced-for-danger state. Their physiology is being up regulated into a fight/flight mode," says Porges. Chaotic or trauma engendering families can make it tough to successfully engage and create a sense of safety and cooperation so that we learn to communicate our needs and desires to those people we depend upon for our very survival. We feel left out in the cold, as if we're floating above the heads of those we yearn to be connected to, out there on our own so to speak. We feel unseen and misunderstood and this experience over and over and over again can morph into a sort of cumulative trauma that informs both our sense of who we are and who we are to others. It becomes the learning that we build upon and carry into all of our interactions. Relational trauma can occur at very subtle levels of engagement or a lack thereof, as well as in its more obvious forms of living with abuse, neglect, illness, or addiction.

## Trauma in the Home

Kids who grow up with this set up all too often learn a negative lesson,— they need to figure everything out in their own head, that it's not such a good idea to try to work something out with another person, especially if what needs to be worked out is sticky. They do not have the experience of becoming calmer and closer through opening up and talking things over, rather they learn that openness can leave them vulnerable to attack. Trauma in the home has a lasting impact.

When those we rely on for our basic needs of trust, empathy, and dependency become abusive or neglectful, it constitutes a double whammy. Not only are we being hurt and confused but the very people we'd go to for solace and explanation of what's going on are the ones causing us pain.

We stand scared and braced for danger in those moments, prepared by eons of evolution, ready to flee for safety or stand and fight. But we simultaneously yearn for connection and to be seen and understood. The result is that we become confused and not ourselves, we lose heart.

Isolation is a common feature of both trauma and depression and it is no wonder why. If we cannot keep ourselves feeling safe, if escape seems impossible because we are children growing up trapped by our own size and dependency within pain engendering families, then something inside of us freezes. Just getting through, just surviving the experience becomes paramount. And our very humanness I compromised, we can grow up in other areas, say intellectually while remaining very closed and immature in intimate connection.

Much of the work of recovery is in reaching back into these frozen inner spaces and coming alive again. Group therapy is a wonderful way of bringing to light these

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dark spots on our emotional lungs. So are relationships in adulthood. For the child of addiction, the COA, partnering and parenting act as triggers for the unresolved pain from childhood, when as adults we attempt to become intimate, those lessons we learned in childhood come jettisoning to the surface. This is what a post traumatic reaction is all about, pain from one time in life, in this case childhood, is restimulated/triggered and played out at another stage. Without awareness this can lead us to use our current relations as unconscious dumping grounds for old pain. With awareness our relationships can become the very key that unlocks the parts of us that need light and healing.

For more info on COAs log onto National Association for Children of Alcoholics, [nacoa.org](http://nacoa.org)

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## Raising Awareness of Opioid Addiction

### FBI, DEA Release Documentary Aimed at Youth

Every day, the nation's law enforcement agencies at the local, state, and federal levels—including the FBI and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)—use investigative resources to target the supply side in the war against drugs.

But even with numerous law enforcement successes in this area, the demand for drugs continues. And one of the more worrisome trends is a growing epidemic of prescription opiate and heroin abuse, especially among young people.

In an effort to help educate students and young adults about the dangers of opioid addiction, the FBI and DEA unveiled a documentary called **Chasing the Dragon: The Life of an Opiate Addict** at the Newseum in Washington, D.C. The 45-minute film, whose title refers to the never-ending pursuit of the original or ultimate high, features stark first-person accounts told by individuals who have abused opioids or whose children have abused opioids, with tragic consequences.

"This film may be difficult to watch," explains FBI Director James Comey, "but we hope it educates our students and young adults about the tragic consequences that come with abusing these drugs and that it will cause people to think twice before becoming its next victim."

And according to Acting DEA Administrator Chuck Rosenberg, "The numbers are appalling—tens of thousands of Americans will die this year from drug-related deaths, and more than half of these deaths are from heroin and prescription opioid overdoses. I hope this [documentary] will be a wakeup call for folks."

Katrina, a former business executive and mother who became addicted to opiates after self-medicating

with pain pills and alcohol and whose own daughter died of a drug overdose. "You can't go back and say, 'I'm sorry,' or set a better example, or talk 'em out of it," she says. And of her own addiction, she explains, "The spiral down is so fast...and I lost everything. I lost my daughter first and foremost. So all the work I did, all those dreams I had, it's like I'm starting over again with a huge weight on my shoulder...all for a pill."

Matt, began using marijuana at 11 and became addicted to opiates at age 15. "In the beginning," he explains, "I would always try to get pills because you know what you're getting. Eventually, that got too expensive, so I went for heroin because it's cheaper."

Trish, whose daughter Cierra—an honor roll student in high school—died after a heroin overdose. "Cierra did not take life for granted until she started using," says her mother. "It is much stronger than you, and it will win." Noting the broader impact of addiction, Trish adds, "It affects everyone in your family for the rest of their life...we're the ones stuck missing you."

**Chasing the Dragon** features interviews with medical and law enforcement professionals discussing a variety of issues, including how quickly addiction can set in, how

the increasing costs of prescription opioids can lead to the use of heroin as a less expensive alternative, the horrors of withdrawal, the ties between addiction and crime, and the fact that, contrary to popular belief, opiate abuse is prevalent in all segments of society.

The documentary is available on this website for viewing or downloading. Copies can also be obtained by contacting your local FBI or DEA field office.

The film can be downloaded for free at [www.fbi.gov/ChasingTheDragon](http://www.fbi.gov/ChasingTheDragon).

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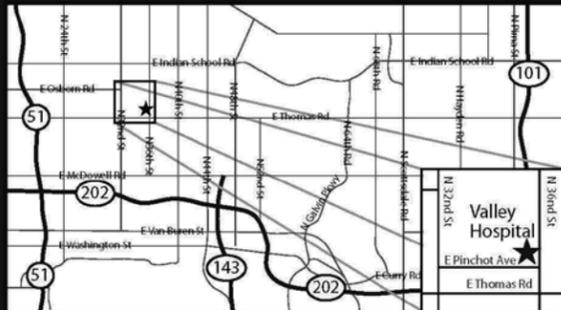


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### HOT TOPICS from page 10

use them in an attempt to get a mental boost as they study.

The findings are published in the *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*.

Study senior author Dr. Ramin Mojtabai told NPR the most common side effects of taking Adderall include anxiety, agitation and insomnia. He noted stimulant drugs are also associated with cardiovascular side effects such as increased blood pressure. In very rare cases the drugs can cause heart attack and stroke, he said.

"The growing problem is among young adults," Dr. Mojtabai noted in a news release. "In college, especially, these drugs are used as study-aid medication to help students stay up all night and cram. Our sense is that a sizeable proportion of those who use them believe these medications make them smarter and more capable of studying. We need to educate this group that there could be serious adverse effects from taking these drugs and we don't know much at all about their long-term health effects."

### Valley Hospital Opens Evening Intensive Outpatient Program

For those seeking to enhance their recovery, on February 22, Valley Hospital opened their evening IOP program. This program provides intensive individual, family and group therapies that focus on symptom reduction and preventing a decline in functioning, as well as eliminating the need for more restrictive treatment (such as residential, inpatient or partial hospitalization). The program is also a step-down service following an individual's discharge from hospitalization, partial hospitalization or residential care. For additional information call Valley Hospital at 602-952-3939.

### Drug Treatment Centers Less Likely than Liquor Stores to Attract Violent Crime: Study

Areas surrounding outpatient drug treatment centers are less likely to experience violent crimes than areas near liquor and corner stores, according to new research.

Researchers at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health say their findings challenge claims that drug treatment centers attract criminals, *HealthDay* reports.

The study examined data about violent crime in areas surrounding 53 publicly funded drug treatment centers in Baltimore, and compared it with data from areas around 53 liquor and corner stores. The liquor and corner store areas had 25 percent more murders, rapes, assaults and robberies per business, the researchers report in the *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs*.

The researchers did not include crimes that occurred in liquor or corner stores, because they are known to be robbed more frequently than drug treatment centers, the article notes.

"Our findings show that drug treatment centers pose no additional risk of violence above and beyond any traditional business in the community," study author C. Debra Furr-Holden said in a news release. "They have gotten a reputation as magnets for crime,

but the data just don't support that. By contrast, communities often solicit other types of businesses to locate in their neighborhoods, even though they appear to have a more profound effect on attracting crime," she noted.

"There's a lot of bias and bigotry against people with addiction problems," said study co-author Dr. Adam Milam.

*"Addiction is preventable and it's treatable. We need to provide treatment centers in the communities where people addicted to drugs live, not say treatment centers aren't welcome here."*

### How to Talk About Bipolar Disorder

Talking about bipolar disorder is awkward. It's getting better, but there is still a huge stigma surrounding mental illness. Telling someone you have a mental illness is more of a coming out process than it is a casual explanation of behavior. I frequently used (and sometimes still do) the vague phrase "I just don't feel well." It jars people to hear "I'm having a depressive episode and I just can't handle social interaction right now." This isn't the case all the time. When people know about and accept mental illness, this sounds like a perfectly reasonable explanation and we appreciate the honesty. Even though it can be so difficult to discuss bipolar disorder, there are ways to improve communication all around.

### For people with bipolar disorder:

#### Educate yourself.

Not everyone knows that bipolar disorder is more than just swinging between depression and mania. Not everyone knows you can have problems between episodes or bipolar disorder is related to other diseases like migraines, PCOS, diabetes and heart disease. Your psychiatrist is a great source of information that can be tailored to your personal experiences. Once you know more about what you're dealing with, it's easier to explain it to others.

#### Write it down.

Sometimes it's difficult to express how you're feeling. "I'm depressed," doesn't quite cut it. Take a few minutes to self-assess. Write down what you're feeling both emotionally and physically. Then read back over it and summarize it. Use this summary to better express aloud how you're feeling.

#### Have a game plan.

When you're in the throes of an episode, it becomes even harder to communicate effectively. Come up with scenarios with your loved ones between episodes. Think back on past experiences and recount what worked and what didn't. Agree upon potential problems and solutions. Write it down.

#### Be understanding.

Unless the person you're talking to also has bipolar disorder, they really cannot imagine what you're going through. Answer their questions without judging them for not knowing. When they ask how they can help you, tell them. They're trying to make

HOT TOPICS continued page 12

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**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—**February 16**. 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](mailto:pcs@pcsearle.com) or call 480-947-5739 to speak to Ellen Hamilton for details.

**March 5— Learn to Explore Your Dreams!** Have you always wondered what your dreams meant? Psychotherapist Sarah Matheson combines Jungian, depth psychology and psychodynamic perspectives, as well as experiential practices, to create a wonderful experience in dreamwork. Leave inspired and equipped to explore the meaning of your dreams, to dialogue with the deeper parts of yourself and to apply what you glean to the evolution of your life. 4300 N. Miller Road, #244, Scottsdale, 85251 10:00a-12:45pm \$125. For information, 602-952-0680, e: Sarah@matheson-counseling.com

**March 16, Sierra Tucson presents: Tucson Be Informed** - Registration & breakfast 8-8:30. Presentation begins 10:30. **"Integrative Treatment of Co-Occurring Disorders," Presenter: Michael V. Genovese, MD, JD.** Co-Occurring addiction and other psychiatric will be reviewed from a neurobiologic and environmental perspective. Presentation will review integrative treatment modalities. 2 Education Credits. \$20.00. Arizona Inn, 2200 East Elm Street Tucson, 85719. Email: Cheryl.LaPlant@sierratucson.com.

**March 18-20— The Daring Way** - 3 day intensive workshop. An experiential methodology based on the research of **Dr. Brene Brown**. Topics include vulnerability, courage, shame and worthiness. Contact: Larcy Dunford, MC, LPC **480-586-6353** or Therese Hensler, MSW, LCSW, **480-424-4777**.

**March 26— Sierra Tucson presents Clinical Supervision Workshop.** Registration & Networking: 8:30 am. Presentation: 9:00 am - 4:00 pm. Lunch on your own. **"Super Vision": Supervision Models & Procedures** presented by Lawrence M. Sideman, Ph.D., LPC, LISAC. Workshop provides in-depth reflection and discussion on supervisory practices for those practicing in community mental health, private practice or managed care settings. Call or email Ryan Young at 480-861-0585 or [RYyoung@crchealth.com](mailto:RYyoung@crchealth.com) \$60.00. Psychological Counseling Services, 3302 N. Miller Rd. Scottsdale, 85251.

**Clinical Breakfast Series** — First Wednesday of the month from 8-9 a.m. **St. Luke's Behavioral Health Trends** and treatments in the behavioral health field, one CEU. St. Luke's Behavioral Health Center Auditorium.

1800 East Van Buren Street.

**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, no charge.** The Meadows Outpatient Center, 19120 N. Pima Road, Suite 125, Scottsdale. Contact: Jim Corrington LCSW, **602-740-8403**.

**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](http://www.cottonwoodtucson.com) or call Jana at **520-743 2141** or email [jmartin@cottonwoodtucson.com](mailto:jmartin@cottonwoodtucson.com) for information.

**SIERRA TUCSON— Alumni Groups.** **Scottsdale**, Tuesdays, 6:00-7:00 p.m. Valley Presbyterian Church 6947 E. McDonald Drive Paradise Valley, AZ 85253. (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, please contact Rob L. at 602-339-4244 or [STSCOTTSDALEALUMNI@GMAIL.COM](mailto:STSCOTTSDALEALUMNI@GMAIL.COM)

**SIERRA TUCSON— 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.

**On Going Support FAMILIES ANONYMOUS** - 12 step program for family members of addicted individuals. Phoenix -Mon. 7:00 P.M., First Methodist Church,

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5510 N. Central Ave. 602-647-5800. Scottsdale Sun. -4:00 P.M., 10427 N. Scottsdale Rd., Scottsdale Fellowship Hall 480-225-1555.

**Thursdays— Men's General Therapy Group** empowering work through blockages to living. Dennis Ryan, M.C., L.P.C. 602-381-8003. Every Thurs., 5 - 6:30 p.m., 6:30-8 p.m. Transformation Institute. 4202 N. 32nd St., Suite J, Phoenix.

**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, Families and Friends (JACS\*) 1st and 3rd Wednesday, 7:30 PM. Ina Levine Jewish Community Campus, 2nd floor Conference Room. 12701 N. Scottsdale Rd., Scottsdale 85254. 602.971.1234 ext. 280 or at [JACSarizona@gmail.com](mailto:JACSarizona@gmail.com)

**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.** Call Sue Shipman 480-633-7292 for details.

**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**.

continued page 13

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## HOT TOPICS from page 10

life easier for you. Unless you have a legitimate reason not to, trust them. You can't do this alone.

### For people without bipolar disorder:

*Talk to us like you would anyone else.*

We're adults who can grasp complicated ideas. Don't be condescending or treat us like children. If the situation warrants it (like during a manic episode), you can keep it simple or go back to the previously mentioned game plan to get through.

### *Listen.*

It can be incredibly difficult for people with bipolar disorder to explain what we're going through, especially if we think there are going to be negative consequences to making ourselves vulnerable. Focus on what we're trying to say and ask for clarification.

### *Educate yourself.*

Just like we have a responsibility to learn what it means to have bipolar disorder, it will make communication

easier to know more about it. In addition to practical information, it may be helpful to see a therapist who specializes in helping loved ones of people with mental illness.

### *Please be patient.*

You're the one on the other end of our mood swings and our shortcomings, but we have to ask for compassion. We did not do this to ourselves. While it's our responsibility to do what we can to function and communicate as well as possible, we need you to recognize that it's going to be harder for us than it would be if we didn't have bipolar disorder.

### *When we ask for help, please help us.*

Asking for help can be the absolute hardest thing to do for someone with bipolar disorder. So when we say we need help, we mean it, whether it's something as simple as talking them through a hard time or getting a suicidal person to the hospital. It could literally be a matter of life and death.

by LaRae LaBouff

# 21

Before anybody else can love you, you have to love yourself.

## Ways to Love Yourself More

*What does it mean to love yourself, and how do you actually do that?*

For various reasons, many of us find it easier to love others more than ourselves. Sometimes we're truly quite awful to ourselves. We subject ourselves to a harsh inner critic, unhealthy relationships, toxic substances, and self-mutilation.

Regardless of the reasons for a lack of self-love, it's time to treat yourself with the love you deserve. Instead of being selfish, as many fear, this self-love is a blueprint that shows others how to love you.

I put together 22 ways to love yourself. Many are simple and straight forward. Some are a harder. You don't have to use all of these ideas, but you'll find many overlap and work nicely together.

- 1. Know yourself.** It's impossible to love yourself if you don't know who you are. Invest in discovering what you believe, value, and like.
- 2. Say "no" when you need to.** Boundaries are an essential form of self-care letting others know you deserve and expect respect.
- 3. Don't compare yourself to others.** Others aren't better or worse, more or less; they're different. You have value just as you are and accepting yourself means there's no need for comparisons.
- 4. Allow yourself down time.** It's time to slow down and allow your body and mind to rest. *You don't have to do it all.* Prioritize what matters most and let go of any guilt in saying no. Rest is rejuvenating and a basic form of self-care.
- 5. Be truly present.** Our lives are full of distractions. Many of these things are fun and worthwhile, but can be draining and keep us from truly knowing and being ourselves.
- 6. Know and use your strengths.** We all have tremendous gifts, but many of them go unnoticed. Focus on your strengths to increase positive feelings.
- 7. Give yourself a treat.** Unlike a reward, it doesn't have to be earned. Be good to yourself by giving yourself treats "just because."
- 8. Be honest with yourself.** Some of us are good at self-deception and we don't know we're doing it. Honesty is key in all relationships. Clearly you can't love your entire messy self if you're lying, minimizing, or making excuses. True self-love is taking responsibility.
- 9. Let yourself off the hook for your mistakes and imperfections.** You're probably harder on yourself than anyone else. Cut yourself some slack and embrace your humanness. Mistakes are normal. Imperfections are part of what makes you — you.

### 10. Work on forgiving yourself.

Sometimes we're holding onto bigger regrets or transgressions. Self-forgiveness is a process of bit by bit believing you truly did the best you could. Accept that some people won't like you and that's O.K. Don't waste time trying to please people who are impossible to please or people who just aren't that important to you. Being yourself means you have to give up your people-pleasing ways and embrace your authentic self.

### 11. Make fun a priority.

Put something fun on your agenda every week. Don't neglect it, like rest, we all need fun in order to feel good. Don't skimp on this important need.

### 12. Practice gratitude.

Gratitude is the simplest way to focus on the good in your life. Identify three things you're grateful for each morning.

### 13. Write down your successes.

I love this self-love activity because it creates a record of your accomplishments that you can re-read whenever you're feeling low. Add to it and read your list on a daily basis for maximum benefit.

### 14. Feel your feelings.

Our feelings are an integral part of who we are. You can't be an authentic person without acknowledging and feeling all of your feelings. Don't shy away from the uncomfortable feelings like anger and sadness. If you deny them, you deny a part of yourself. Allow yourself to express them in a healthy, respectful way.

### 15. Take good care of your body.

Good health is truly priceless. Give yourself the gift of feeling physically well — exercise regularly, eat healthfully, drink water, get 7-8 hours of sleep most nights.

### 16. Pursue a hobby.

Hobbies are fun, relaxing, challenging, creative, athletic, social, and educational. Find something that meets your needs.

### 17. Stand up for yourself.

Like boundaries, being assertive is a way of showing others your opinions and needs matter. Loving yourself means you know your value and can communicate it to others.

### 18. Write yourself a love letter.

This challenges you to identify the things you like about yourself.

### 19. Ask for help.

Help isn't weak. It's human. We all need it at times.

### 20. Speak kindly to yourself.

Talk to yourself like you'd talk to a loved one. Don't cut yourself down, call yourself names, or criticize yourself

### 21. Surround yourself with people who treat you with kindness and respect.

Who you spend time with reflects how you feel about yourself. People who feel worthy surround themselves with positive people. Sometimes loving yourself means you have to end relationships with abusive or unkind people.



# Federal investigation reveals parity violations

The federal government is enforcing parity and investigating violations, according to a report by *The U.S. Department of Labor*. "Improving Coverage for Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Patients" presents information on mental health and substance abuse parity violations investigated among insurance carriers from October 2010 through the end of 2015.

"It's one thing to hear the complaints, frustrations and difficulties of getting paid by carriers anecdotally and another to see where the Department of Labor is specifically finding problems," says Marvin Ventrell, executive director of the National Association of Addiction Treatment Providers (NAATP).

While there have been successes with the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act and progress has been made in terms of enforcing and implementing the law, the report found both quantitative (payment-oriented) and non-quantitative (access-oriented) violations. Among the 1,515 investigations carried out, 171 violations were found—58 percent of which were non-quantitative.

## Government action

Bottom line, Ventrell says, the government is acting and the industry should be pleased. But while parity has given the industry a tool to work with, parity by no means is where it needs to be.

"There are substantial violations that need to be corrected in order for millions of people to get the care that they need," he says. "We're talking 22 million people in 2014 ages 12 and over reporting that they did not get addiction care when they needed it—that's a lot."

Ventrell adds that the industry must treat this as a broad systemic concern. Insurance commissioners and attorneys general on the state level can be active or inactive, he says, but being more active will improve statewide healthcare and prevent deaths.

"There's a regulatory administrative process that states can be very helpful with, but individuals and agencies also need to do their part, which is to report," he says.

*"Payers are getting more sophisticated in their ways to deny," Munson says. "I don't think we've seen any real significant reduction in the level of scrutiny or the denial of care—yet."*

Ventrell says that consumers may have coverage that they don't know about or they might not be aware they can appeal denied coverage. It's up to the Department of Labor to educate the public.

"These [violations] are still really underreported," says Scott Munson, CEO of Sundown M Ranch. "There are many more going on, but it's difficult to get people to identify and go through what it takes to actually file a complaint and have it investigated and have a finding."

Similarly, individuals and treatment providers must work to educate carriers, demand coverage, and make sure a denial has a valid reason.

"Payers are getting more sophisticated in their ways to deny," Munson says. "I don't think we've seen any real significant reduction in the level of scrutiny or the denial of care—yet."

It's not out of the question to convince a provider to pay when the proper information is presented, Ventrell adds. But it's necessary to document those calls and interactions so if there is a violation, it can be reported with data and taken care of by the state.

"The system is very difficult to work under, and this is not the standard of operation in other disease fields," says Ventrell. "Let's all as agencies—healthcare providers, insurers, patients and treatment centers—look at this and figure out what the various concurrent approaches to solving the problem are."

Munson adds that the violations in the report are just the tip of the iceberg.



The National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence

## One Agency—Three individual Programs for Women

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

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## Events from page 11

**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. **800-877-4520 x2141.** cottonwoodtucson.com

**ACOA** Thursdays, 7:00 p.m., North Scottsdale United Methodist Church, 11735 N. Scottsdale Rd., Scottsdale. **www.aca.arizona.org**

**ACA.** 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 for addictions to food and food behaviors. 18 meetings scheduled per week. **520-733-0880** or **www.oa-southernaz.org.**

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

**Pills Anonymous—Glendale** Tues. 7-8:00 pm. HealthSouth Stroke Rehab 13460 N. 67th Ave. 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. Janice **602-909-8937.**

**CELEBRATE RECOVERY—Chandler Christian Church.** Weekly Fridays 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, E: **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

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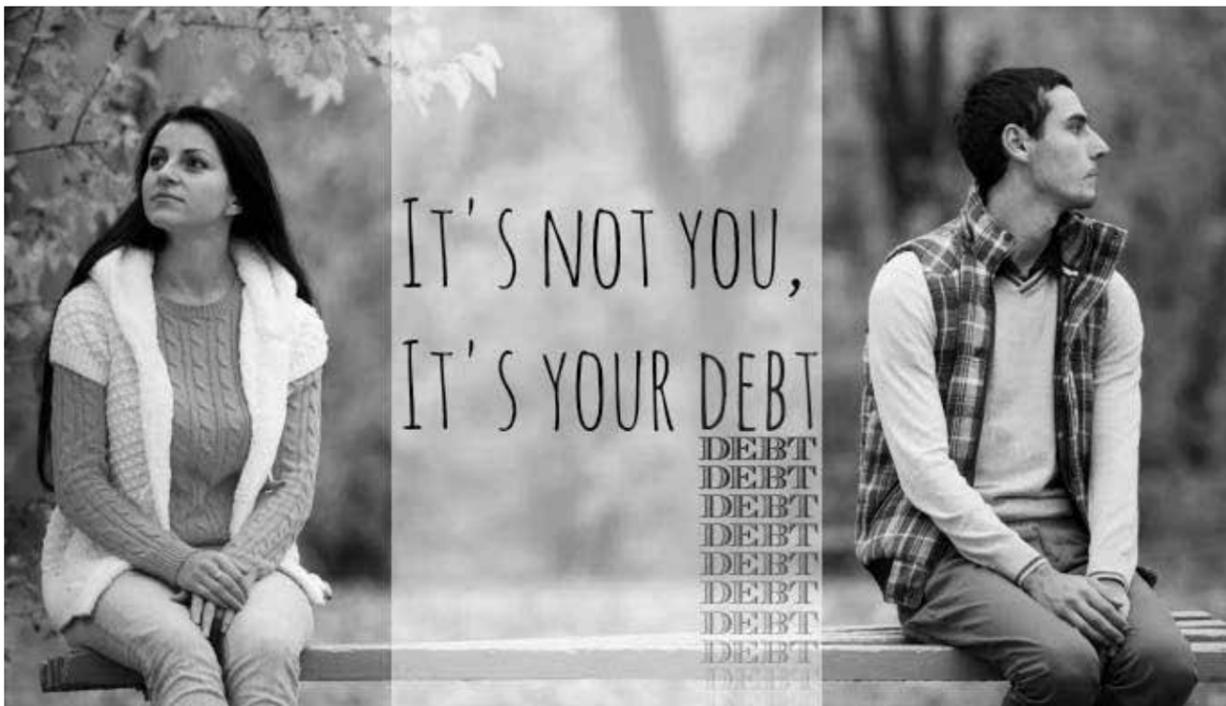
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Amity Foundation	520-749-5980
AZ. Dept. of Health	602-364-2086
Office of Problem Gambling	800-NEXTSTEP
Aurora Behavioral Health	623-344-4444
Carla Vista	480-612-0296
Calvary Addiction Recovery Center	602-279-1468
Carleton Recovery	928-642-5399
Celebrate 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
Intervention ASAP	602-606-2995
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
Turn Your Life Around	520-887-2643
TERROS	602-685-6000
Valley Hospital	602-952-3939
Veritas Counseling	(602) 863-3939
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## Love and marriage and debt

by Jesse Campbell

Shakespeare coined the phrase “Love is blind,” but if Shakespeare was around today he might be inclined to switch that up to *“Love is blind, but not if you have a boatload of debt, in which case love sees that business and needs you to take care of it ASAP.”*

### The evidence against love's blindness?

A recent poll conducted by the National Foundation for Credit Counseling (NFCC), which found that a majority of respondents would have serious reservations about taking on the debt of the person they love.

- 37 percent would refuse to get married until their partner's debt was completely repaid
- 10 percent would get married, but would not help pay their partner's debt
- 7 percent would simply end the relationship with an indebted partner
- The remaining 46 percent of those polled were willing to get married and then jointly pay off their partner's debt.

### Protecting yourself

It makes sense that consumers are, in many cases, putting their emotions to the side and considering the implications of assumed debt. Financial strife has always been one of the leading causes of discontent within relationships. It's human nature. Too much debt or too little money puts us in a vulnerable position. It makes us feel unsafe and safety is one of our primal motivators.

So finding yourself in love with someone with sizable debt or obviously poor money management skills puts you in a tricky position. The heart says, “Yes,” but the mind says, “About this credit score...” Because in addition to creating feelings of potential danger, your partner's money problems are going to have a real, tangible impact on your joint life together. As a couple you might find it difficult to buy a home or car. You might have rental applications rejected and face higher insurance premiums.

Does this mean that the 7 percent who would walk away from a relationship because of debt are right? Not necessarily.

### Keys to making it work

- **Communication.** If you can't bring yourself to talk about money (especially money problems) you're just asking for trouble. Keep everything out in the open. Make money talks a safe place to voice your concerns and do your best to really listen to your partner.
- **Compromise.** Your attitude towards money is very rarely going to match 100 percent with a potential partner. Be open to making slight alterations to how you use and view money – but just make sure that your partner is equally open to change.
- **Commit to improve.** Don't make the mistake of convincing yourself that you're right and your partner is wrong. You're just different. And, frankly, you can both improve. So commit to identifying where you'd like to be as a couple and work towards that goal together.

Love and money will always go hand-in-hand and financial baggage can be heavy, but recognizing and addressing your differences will go a long way toward making happily ever after a reality.

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Surrender To Win Film Festival is a non-profit dba of Earthbase Recovery, PO Box 12042, Prescott, AZ 86305

7:15pm. St. Francis in the Foothills, 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/](http://www.oaphoenix.org/) 602-234-1195.

SLAA—Sex and Love Addict Anonymous 602-337-7117. [slaa-arizona.org](http://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](http://www.arizonada.org).

Crystal Meth Anonymous [www.cmaaz.org](http://www.cmaaz.org) or CMA Hotline 602-235-0955. Tues. and Thurs. Stepping Stone Place 1311 N 14th St. [cmaaz.org/god-zombies-the-awakening](http://cmaaz.org/god-zombies-the-awakening)

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