

Together AZ

Inspiring Success on the Road to Recovery AUGUST 2021

Traveling the Path of INNERCHANGE with Families

By Michael L Gaziano LCSW,
Clinical Director, Recovery Ways

Family relations have always been complicated. Add a pandemic, an unprecedented election year, social racial injustice, and an increase in mental illness and, as you might expect, families are sharing more complex struggles than ever before. (*Now that we are finally able to see them live and in person again!*) It's a whole new opportunity for all to heal, grow, and recover.

Danger or Opportunity?

The Chinese have two symbols for crisis; the first is danger. It is understandable with all the many challenges we have faced over past year that many families and loved ones were or are in crisis. Danger is around us all. However, the second character for crisis is opportunity. We have a great opportunity to adapt and build a resolve to move ahead as healthcare providers and families seeking help for their loved ones.

At *Recovery Ways* our family program has a strong foundation built on patients and families learning together how to support each other and allow space for their own innerchange and self-awareness. In my opinion as a Clinical Director with decades of experience, the most vital understanding to a family program is that *"Healing is Possible."*

Throughout my years of working with families and patients, I have been able to gain an understanding of the complex challenges and concerns they face in regards to substance abuse disorder and how it has affected their family. There is a wealth of information and tools that can help the family heal together and mend the bonds of trust that have been broken.

The Three C's

"The Three C's" founded in Al-Anon can provide the vital insight families need to make positive changes. They are: Cause, Control, and Cure. In order to provide a safe space and a healthy path to innerchange, families and patients must learn that no one person or thing causes the behaviors and actions of another. One might feel inclined to place the blame on past trauma or substance use for current behaviors, and while they might contribute to the root of negative actions, they are not solely responsible.

Control, the second "C", works to provide a better understanding of the fact that we cannot control the choices and behaviors of others. We learn that our attempts to do so will result in increased hurt, emotional pain, and possible resentment. The desire

to control is often based on fear and frustration around the behaviors of loved ones. They fear the hurt they may cause to themselves and others, and feel frustration at having to watch the destruction that person is causing in their lives. This is where control really comes in. Many families are under the assumption that if their loved ones could just think rationally and see the damage their addiction is causing, they would simply stop doing it.

"Together, families can understand the importance of accountability and healthy boundaries in enhancing recovery."

This type of thinking does not take into account that substance use and/or unresolved trauma is an illogical disease.

Families learn how their attempts to manage or control another person's life do not work. It causes resentment, distrust, despair, and anger. Families' efforts to 'help' may in fact enable and/or contribute to the ongoing problems and difficulty of their loved one's life. Together, families can understand the importance of accountability and healthy boundaries in enhancing recovery and personal growth.

The third and final "C" puts the focus on a cure. This isn't magic; it's not a quick permanent fix. Rather, the cure encompasses both an understanding of the problem and the tools to live a healthier lifestyle and gain positive innerchange.



The additional "C"

An additional C in this discussion will fall on communication. Over years of work with children, adolescents, and adults one major conflict seems to be present in all families and relationship: *"You don't understand, you don't listen, and you are blaming me."*

Communication can either foster compassion and care, or it can control, manipulate, and cause resentment. I have worked with others to build on a few key concepts to healthy communication which I like to call the "the essential ingredients to a recipe for healthy understanding and listening."

First and foremost, we must be willing to take emotional risks in our relationships by reaching out and learning to communicate what we need and want. This means we will learn and grow in our relationship by engaging in them. Keep in mind we can't just simply start off a conversation with someone without asking for permission to see if this is a good time to talk. I truly used to believe that when I was ready to talk; my spouse or family member must be automatically ready to listen. That is a misconception that many of us have believed to be true. Many times a person is not ready when you are — and we must be understanding when they say it isn't a good time for them. It's not a rejection, but rather an honest response to a question being

Path to Innerchange— cont. page 6



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Publisher's Note

By Barbara Nicholson-Brown
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Recovery and Resetting our Moral Compass

When I was active in my addiction and alcoholism, I never cared much about anything — other than my own wants and needs. The word selfish does not come close to how I acted and behaved. If I hurt someone, lied or cheated my way around to get what I wanted—it didn't matter. Other people in my life, whether family, friends, colleagues or acquaintances, how I affected them did not matter either. And all the times I was confronted or approached about how I was actually killing myself fell on deaf ears.

After I hit bottom on June 17, 1990, I surrendered and began my recovery journey. I jumped into my new way of life with both feet and entered into relationships with my fellows on this path, who were people I could trust, be real and honest with. I learned and continue to do so today, the world does not revolve around me alone.

Through the guidance of a trusted sponsor, I shared all the wrongs, shame and guilt I carried around for years—and was given the opportunity to reset my moral compass. It's how I live today. I don't lie. I don't cheat.

What I do.... is keep my word, try to give more than I take, look you in the eye without the fear you will find out who I really am. I want to be real and want those in my life to be real with me. While life is not a fairytale, it's the best it has ever been—including all the ups and downs. I am grateful.

Please stay safe, we are not out of this Covid nightmare yet!



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Published Monthly Arizona's Addiction Recovery Newspaper
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Learn the Law: How States Prevent Underage Drinking



Underage Drinking Parties

Underage drinking parties pose significant public health risks. They are high-risk settings for binge drinking and associated alcohol problems, including impaired driving. Youth and young adults are often introduced to heavy drinking behaviors at these events by older adults. Such parties often occur on private property, with or without the knowledge or presence of a parent or other responsible adult. State host party laws seek to make underage drinking parties less likely by imposing liability on adult hosts who host or allow the parties.

- *Liability generally occurs through criminal proceedings that can lead to sanctions such as fines or imprisonment.*
- *Liability generally occurs through criminal proceedings that can lead to sanctions such as fines or imprisonment.*

These laws apply even if the adult cannot be shown to have furnished the alcohol for the party. Some state host party laws explicitly address underage drinking parties and others are broader in scope and prohibit individuals from allowing underage drinking on their properties generally.

Did you know?

- Only 31 states have host party laws?
- In 23 of those 31 states, laws require that the host knew about the party to trigger liability?

<https://go.usa.gov/xsyZv>

Learn more about what your state prohibits and how it compares to other states and to national best practices regarding the Hosting Underage Drinking visit <https://www.stopalcoholabuse.gov/>

Real Love *vs.* Right Now Love

By Dina Evan, PhD



We’ve all been through hell during 2020 and 2021. But as I have said before, I feel these times of the greatest challenge are also holy moments filled with the opportunity for new awareness’ and greater levels of consciousness. We throw the word love around as if it’s something we can buy for a buck off the table on the corner table at the fair and it lasts about as long. I don’t think we mean to create this kind of jump right in love, I think many of us have no reference point for what real love looks like, feels like, or we get complacent or fearful about it.

Real love is so much more, as many of us have learned during this time while stretching our hearts in grief, offering profound presence and empathy and realizing what we lose when we forget that love is really all that matters. But, how do we tell the difference so we can push our souls forward past the initial excitement that feels so promising, but often delivers so little? How can we wait to be sure what we are feeling is the real thing? So you’ll recognize it, here are some of the gifts of real love.

One of the first things you’ll notice about real love is you have suddenly become more concerned about another’s needs, rather than only focused on your own. You desire to know what your son, daughter, mother, beloved is really feeling and you develop a deeper connection to those needs in a way so much so, that you’ll need to be careful to not ignore or stop sharing your own needs as well. Real love is balanced, and both people, whether family, friend or partner are equally important. Real love does not require you to try to make time for someone. You make time for the person you love because you love them — and you love being with them.

We all feel when we are the person someone is making time for — a sense of being a burden. Eventually, if we feel this way, we stop asking for time, because the feeling is too painful. When that happens it’s because we have forgotten that person’s worth in our life. We have stopped learning from them, enjoying them, caring about the quality of their life, their character and what a gift they are in our lives. We would rather be going, or doing anything else because we have already decided that person has nothing to offer us. And with that conscious or unconscious decision, we also miss the greatest gift, being all we learn about ourselves with real love. The most important reason for relationships is they show us who WE really are.

When love is **NOT** real, it becomes a chore and we can become cruel — because we resent having to take time. That’s when love becomes dark and trust goes away. We find ourselves lying even when we don’t need to, because we have lost sight of what we are losing or who WE are becoming. We can say hurtful things without even realizing it. I once heard a friend say, “I can’t believe my mom got a manicure with those awful hands.” Her mom was 80, and I wondered what she expected of those hands which held her from her first breath, through every job and challenge in her life should look like.

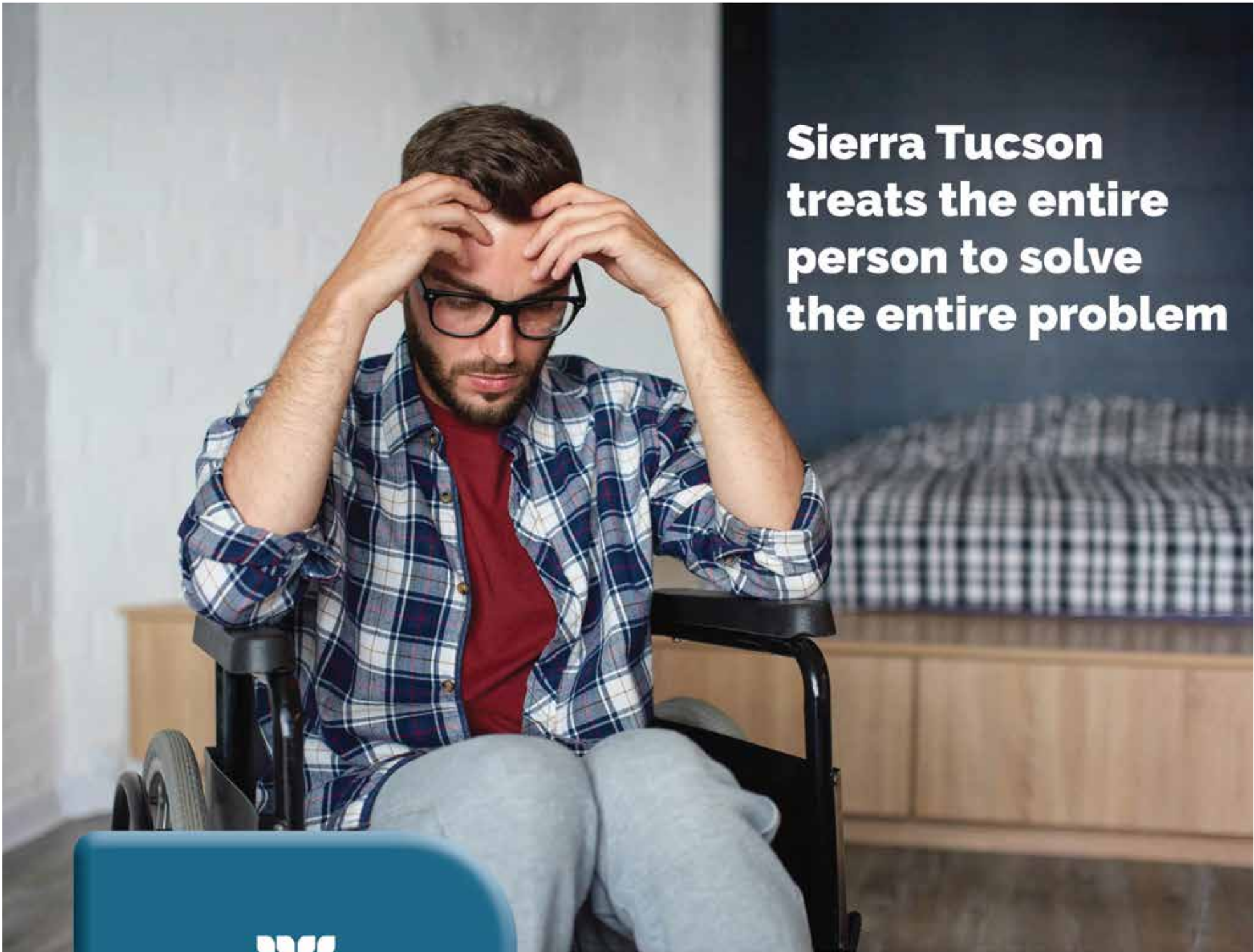
Real love connections fill us up, enlivens us, and adds to the quality of our life experiences no matter the age, gender or who one loves. And, no matter how old our parents are, we still have so much to learn from their life experiences.

When love is real, it makes you feel whole and not empty. The people in your life who truly love you are the most precious gifts the Universe has to offer and it is always mutual, an instant mutual forever blessing.

Perhaps, one of the gifts of this holy moment, is to remind ourselves that real love is worth creating, nurturing and sustaining, because after all, not is it the only thing you take with you when you leave, and the only thing that lasts long after you are gone, but also, is there really anything more worth having?



Dr. Evan is a marriage, family, child therapist and consciousness counselor. She has presented nationwide seminars and workshops, written several books and created meditation CDs for couples, individual and mental health professionals. She has also won national acclaim as a human rights advocate. Visit drdinaevan.com or call 602-571-8228.



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ingredients, it has made for healthy communication and understanding. It’s important to restate that healing is possible when we learn to communicate our needs and put healthy boundaries around the things we no longer want to engage in with our loved ones. With these concepts in mind, let’s now move to ways that these can assist in addressing our concerns around trauma, substance use, and depression.

“Honesty is a key concept in healthy communication as it allows for frank discussion without fear of conflict, blame, or judgment. We can be honest without being hurtful.”

Families suffer so many traumas from grief and loss due to the destructive nature of substance use. I have truly come to the understanding that trauma has no expiration date. The experiences that impact families can start as early as infancy, and cause lasting trauma through to adulthood.

Let me share a personal example of how trauma can start in infancy. My mother and father actively campaigned for John F. Kennedy during the 1960 presidential election. My father worked tirelessly everyday on this campaign while my mother was pregnant with me. They spent long, taxing hours, striving to get their candidate elected. Needless to say, they were under extreme stress and tension at this time. So, when I was born in December of 1960, I arrived with my fists clenched and my body a bundle of raw nerves. The doctor looked at my mother and said, “You have an election baby.” During my childhood this in utero trauma revealed itself in other ways. I was a hyperactive child who had many challenges.

Trauma and nervous system regulation are tied closely together. We see that Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) contribute to nervous system dysregulation. Many people are learning that some of their past childhood experiences that have been left unresolved are impacting their behaviors and emotions in the present.

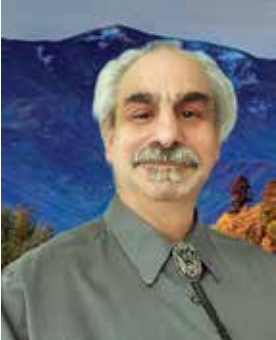
Years of working with adolescents from families in crisis have rooted the importance of addressing trauma because of the impact it may have in later stages of development and adulthood. In my early years as a caseworker for child welfare, I had firsthand experiences of how childhood trauma due to emotional neglect, substance abuse, and other abuse can have a negative impact throughout life. Coping skills and the ability to problem solve suffer greatly because of this. **There is a saying that “the body keeps the score” when it comes to trauma.** A person may not feel they are affected in the present by past trauma. They may feel they don’t need to process experiences or emotions. But on a deeper level, the body does indeed keep the score, and in ways they might not realize, past trauma does affect them.

The term ‘dysfunctional families’ is often associated with feelings of guilt, shame, and fear. In family therapy, one comes to understand that dysfunction is part of the human experience. We break the word ‘dysfunction’ into two terms: dys means not, and functional means fun. A dysfunctional family is not fun, and every family goes through at least some time when things are just not fun. Not only does this take the scariness out of the word ‘dysfunctional,’ but it’s also a chance to reframe things and an invitation to engage in open, honest communication without blame, shame, or judgment. Processing trauma can create increased compassion and understanding within families, and give them better clarity on how to move forward on the path to healing.

The sustainability of recovery is fostered by ongoing support and family involvement. Family therapy helps members understand that relapse can happen, and that it’s not due to a lack of willpower, or a lack of commitment to stop. They all gain a better understanding that healing involves nervous system regulation, emotional support and, when indicated, medication management. Families realize that continual recovery comes from their own innerchange and support of others’ independent journey on their recovery path.

At **Recovery Ways** our program builds on compassion, patience, and understanding for each other, reducing resentments and building on a relationship of love and respect. The core piece to true innerchange is no longer enabling or rescuing another person, but rather developing a healthier understanding of substance use, trauma informed care, and support. With that core piece in place and a commitment to our own emotional health, “healing is possible.”

The human experience is difficult. No one goes through life without taking some damage, some hits, some disappointments, and some hurt. It’s part of what helps us to grow and progress if we use these experiences as teaching, strengthening lessons. We can readjust, adapt, make better choices, pull our loved ones close, and keep moving forward. We can encourage healing in our own lives and in the lives of those we love by not ignoring trauma,



but by addressing it honestly and without judgment. Ashkay Dubey beautifully captures what healing is in his quote, “Healing doesn’t mean the damage never existed. It means the damage no longer controls your life.”
Michael L. Gaziano LCSW is Clinical Director at Recovery Ways. For immediate help call 888.986.7848 To contact Michael email: mgaziano@recoveryways.com. 1-801-326-5180 ext 1058. recoveryways.com

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asked. If someone isn’t ready to have a conversation, ask him or her when a good time would be. Let them know you have important things to share with them. Keep in mind that it would be better if that time was the same day and you can be honest with them about this as well. This leads to the next ingredient, which is honesty.

Honesty

Honesty is a key concept in healthy communication as it allows for frank discussion without fear of conflict, blame, or judgment. We can be honest without being hurtful. We can learn to express open feelings without being on the offensive. The best way to express this is by using “I” statements rather than “You” statements.

“I” statements increase accountability and responsibility for our own feelings, behaviors, and emotions. When we start with “I,” we invite a discussion. When we start with “you,” we begin an interrogation or lecture. I know personally when someone starts with an “I” statement I’m more open to hearing what he or she has to say. People have a tendency to quickly go to a blame statement when they start with **you**.

Let’s now explore what happens when we think we are listening to someone, yet end up playing the “Point Game” instead. The game goes like this: “You did this...”, “oh yeah? Well, two weeks ago you did that...”, “Oh yeah? Well, a month ago you did all of these things...” And on it goes. Sound familiar? You’re not alone. Oftentimes the point game gets played due to fear that we won’t get our point across and thus lose an argument. However, even engaging in the point game is an automatic loss for both participants. We must be willing to find middle ground and compromise. This leads to next ingredient, which is to support differences of opinion without the need to be right.

I was presenting these concepts to a group of families who were learning how to communicate and share with their loved ones in treatment. I looked out in the audience and said “you can pick your mountain tops just don’t make it a mountain range.” In essence, this means you can find points you feel are important to hold onto and allow for differences of opinion on other points that might not be as important. This makes for a more balanced and respectful relationship. One more ingredient to consider is speaking to one another as equals thus avoiding a one-up-one-down relationship. I have found by learning to communicate my needs and feeling and following these



Self Forgiveness as a Practice

By Marianne Gouveia, Founder, Eric's House

"There is no sense in punishing your future for the mistakes of your past. Forgive yourself, grow from it, and then let it go."

—Melanie Koulouris

When we lose someone we love, we often see ourselves as failures for our inability to keep our loved ones alive. My son Eric died over six years ago. I spent many days wondering what I could have done differently. The endless questions that continue to haunt us. . . *Why didn't I see the signs? Why didn't I get there sooner? Would he be alive if I didn't work? What if I changed doctors?* Endless thoughts spinning around in my head like little tops. At times, these thoughts have taken control. They seem infinite and each time I reflect upon them, I discover entirely new ways to punish myself for my failures.

However, when I consider all the ways in which I showed my love, I believe my successes far outweigh my failures. **Consider this: we are wired to survive, and when we lose someone to suicide, we must blame someone, who better than ourselves?**

Accepting the truth

We do everything we possibly can to keep our loved ones healthy and alive. Their leaving us was a painful decision for them, but it was their decision. Therein lies the tragedy. The truth is — no one is to blame. Only the circumstances — the perfect storm — the situations that created the reasons for him or her to leave. I realize now I had no power or control in those last few minutes before Eric passed.

There is another truth as well. We are not perfect human beings. As hard as we try to be perfect, we make mistakes. Tragically, our loved ones were in undeniable pain we do not understand. Their fear of living was more powerful than their fear of dying. As hard as we try, we have no power or control over their decisions. All we could do was love them, with imperfectly perfect love.

What exactly is self-forgiveness?

Joe Koelzer, co-founder of *The Clearing*, an addiction rehab in Friday Harbor, Washington says . . . "Self-forgiveness is the process by which we release ourselves for the judgments that we hold against ourselves, because when we accept that we are the ones holding the judgment, we also see we are the ones who can release it, and we are the ones who can set ourselves free."

I wish we could flip a switch and be better. But to forgive ourselves, we must first learn to stop judging ourselves. It is a practice that develops over time. By forgiving ourselves, we can move forward toward healing from our loss. Reframing might help you reflect on your feelings so that you can release self-judgement and practice self-compassion.

Let's practice . . .

Judgement: It was my fault. I failed him so I am a failure.

Reframe: I could not have prevented his death. I loved him. I walked with him.

Judgement: I didn't take her feelings seriously. I should have listened more, been more present with her.

Reframe: How could I have known then what I know now? I forgive myself for being imperfect.

Judgement: If we had not spoken angry words, she would still be alive.

Reframe: I feel compassion for myself for saying things that I wish I could change.

Dr. Alan Wolfelt, my mentor and teacher, says, "Human nature subconsciously resists so strongly the idea we cannot control all the events of one's life that we would rather fault ourselves for a tragic occurrence than accept our inability to prevent it." We try to go backward to prevent something in the past over which we had no control. But that is not the point. The point is not that you could have prevented his or her death, the point is you feel like you could have.

The good news is that while you can't go back, you can practice self-compassion so you can release yourself of the fury of guilt, regret, and shame. I try to practice these every day.

- Remember to allow yourself to feel your feelings. Don't push them away, give them the attention they deserve. But continue to remind yourself that there are some things you simply could not control.
- Be compassionate with yourself. Treat yourself with compassion just as you have treated your loved one. You cannot move through grief when you are holding onto feelings of shame and self-judgement.
- Remember — you are a good person and you loved your parent, daughter, son, spouse, or friend unconditionally.
- Remember — you have suffered a horrific and unthinkable loss. You cannot turn back time, do it over, or differently. If you could, I am certain you would. Suicidal forces overtook your loved one.
- Remember — your grief deserves your compassion.

Be kind to yourself, be gentle, be aware of your humanness, be willing to accept who and what you are, and willing to love yourself as a whole person with all your blemishes and scars.

Marianne Gouveia Founder / Chairman Certified Grief Recovery Specialist (GRS) Certified Grief Companion (Dr. Wolfelt Method). After the loss of her youngest son, Marianne chose to turn her tragedy into good for others. She founded EricsHouse in 2017 to help those left behind sort through these devastating losses in order to integrate their grief so they may find joy and happiness again. EricsHouse helps people rise, survive, and thrive even in the face of devastation. www.ericshouse.org



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What will you do with your life now?

By Alan Cohen

As the pandemic recedes, we are all looking forward to reclaiming something like the life we once knew. But could one of the purposes of the pandemic be to direct us to a life better than the one we knew? While many people hope the world returns to normal, that could be the worst of our new choices. We now stand at a critical crossroads that will either plunge the world into deeper darkness or elevate it to the light.

When my mentor Hilda Charlton received a student who had just been healed of a dire disease, Hilda would ask that person, “What will you do with your life now?” We might ask the same question of ourselves after moving through the long, dark tunnel of this planetary disease. **What have we learned that can make our lives more meaningful?**

A *Course in Miracles* tells us, “All things are lessons God would have me learn.” This is true on a planetary level as well as a personal level. While many of the results of the coronavirus pandemic were tragic, we were also bestowed with life-changing experiences. We connected with our families and came to appreciate them far more. We had unprecedented time to delve into spiritual studies and practices. We quit going to toxic office environments and retooled our careers, working from home. While many people hid in fear and protection, others reached out and helped people who were hurting. For the first time in history, all of humanity came together for the common purpose of healing.

When a student asked the spiritual teacher Bashar what was the spiritual reason behind the pandemic, Bashar answered, “There are always organisms in nature that could be detrimental to humanity if they were allowed to proliferate. But humanity is generally immune to them. When humanity drifts from nature and lives contrary to the natural order, physically and spiritually, humanity’s immunity drops and the world becomes vulnerable to diseases to which it would otherwise be impervious.”

The pandemic was not a random event or a punishment

It was a wake-up call for each of us as individuals and humanity as a whole — to make necessary course corrections and live as our natural selves rather than deny them. If we go back to working insanely and wedging in little or no time for the people we love; or neglecting our physical well-being in favor of stress; or fighting over trifles; or dropping into national or racial divisiveness; or becoming self-involved rather than reaching out; then the pandemic will have served no purpose. Sadly, some similar or even more dire nightmare will come around until the voice for healing gets our attention. Let us avoid the need for another two-by-four whack, extract the blessing from the challenge, and make it work in our favor.



When I studied organic gardening, I consulted with lots of resources to find out how to keep bugs and diseases from destroying our crops. While the books and experts gave various tips and remedies, they all came to the same conclusion: when a plant is grown in healthy, nutritious soil, it maintains a natural immunity to pests and diseases. Here we have a magnificent metaphor for all of our lives:

When we are well-rooted in our spiritual nature, the slings and arrows of the world cannot harm us.

As we drop our masks, make social distancing more social, return to offices, and go back to parties, concerts, and public gatherings, let us remember Hilda’s question: ***What will you do with your life now?*** If we establish and maintain a higher quality of connection with ourselves, each other, and the universe, the pandemic will have taught us well. We have worked our way out of the nightmare. ***Will we now stay awake?***



Alan Cohen is the author of the bestselling *A Course in Miracles Made Easy* and his newly-released inspirational book, *Soul and Destiny*. Join Alan and musician Karen Drucker for a transformational in-person ACIM-based retreat in California, Into the Light, December 6-10, 2021. For information on this program and Alan’s other books, recordings, and trainings, visit www.alancohen.com.

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Being charged with a DUI is an exhausting and expensive process.

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in. Explain that real friends will give them space to be themselves and won't make them do anything they're uncomfortable with.

Socializing

Some teens use drugs and alcohol to overcome insecurities, let their guard down and feel socially confident. Substance use may make them feel like they are really open and connecting with others. In addition to more obvious risks, this can lead teens to feel like substance use is necessary to achieve a certain level of interaction.

What parents can do:

- Find activities for your teen to socialize in a healthy, safe and supervised environment.
- If your child is socializing at someone else's home, know where they are. Call the parents in advance to verify the occasion, location and that there will be supervision.
- Communicate your expectations and rules for when your teen goes out with friends, and include regular check-ins.
- Model healthy behaviors. Find opportunities to socialize and connect in environments that don't include

alcohol.

Life transitions

Periods of transition in teens' lives — like moving, divorce, puberty, changing schools, an illness or death in the family — can become a time of upheaval, leading some to attempt to find solace in alcohol or drugs.

What Parents Can Do:

- Ramp up the monitoring and communication during and after transitions.
- Encourage an open dialogue with your teen about their experiences.
- Set aside regular one-on-one time with your teen to bond and have fun together.

Emotional and psychological pain

Whether it's the pressure of everyday teen drama or the emotional toll of family problems, stress or trauma, some teens use substances to dull the very real pain in their lives. Loneliness, low self-esteem, depression, anxiety disorder and other mental health issues are commonly associated with teen substance use. Furthermore, many of these issues occur in combination with one another, each compounding the intensity of the others.

What parents can do:

- Offer empathy and compassion. Let your child know you understand. Acknowledge everyone struggles sometimes.
- Remind your child you are there for support and guidance — and that it's important to you that she or he is healthy and happy and makes safe choices.
- Model healthy coping skills like exercise, meditation or mindfulness. Show your kids how to learn from mistakes and disappointments.
- Brainstorm together to identify healthy ways to manage the stress in their life (e.g., more sleep, getting outdoors, one-on-one times, etc.). Let your child offer suggestions and help them think through their ideas.

If your child is suffering, reassure them that you will seek out appropriate professional help and then do just that.

(Source: <https://drugfree.org/>)

Prevention & Early Action

Is substance use a part of "**Normal**" Teen Behavior?

By Partnership to End Addiction

We immunize. We require seat belts in the car and helmets while biking. We insist on sunscreen. We do just about everything we can to ensure that our kids are healthy, safe and primed for success. But when it comes to drinking alcohol or even smoking marijuana, why does it seem so easy to shrug it off as “a rite of passage” or “just experimenting”?

Substance use and the teen brain

It's easy to recognize the obvious risks of drug, alcohol or nicotine use — that is, that it can result in negative consequences like car accidents, personal injury and in some cases may lead to addiction. But less obvious is the impact substance use has on the still-developing teen brain.

In the same way we've come to recognize the negative consequences that a mother's drinking or smoking can have on a developing fetus, we now know there are distinct risks to brain development with teen substance use.

Consider the construction of a house as a metaphor. First the foundation is poured, followed by framing, wiring and plumbing over the course of time. The brain develops in a similar way, with the foundation being laid before birth and into the early years of childhood. Adolescence is another time of rapid brain development where the brain's framing and wiring become more efficient and the brain develops skills to focus, prioritize and problem-solve.

Vaping, drinking or using substances can damage the brain's wiring, increasing the likelihood of learning difficulties and physical and mental health problems during the teen years and well into adulthood. Just as a house is still functional with a cracked foundation and faulty wiring, so is the human brain, but neither is optimal.

Why teens drink and use substances

From mood swings to rebellion, many types of challenging behavior are normal during the teen years, but experimenting with substance use isn't



one of them. We also need to rethink our perception of norms. It's not true that “everyone vapes” or “everyone drinks.”

That said, a variety of common teen experiences can become an excuse or reason for substance use. Understanding why some teens drink or use substances is a valuable step toward keeping them healthy and safe.

Fitting in

Feelings of being an outsider and longing to be included and liked by others are pretty pronounced during the teen years. If the kids your teen wants to be friends with, or is hanging out with, are drinking or using substances, they may feel they need to participate as well or risk being left out. Some teens see substance use as an easy path to making friends, fitting in or being accepted with the “right” crowd.

What parents can do:

- Get to know your kid's friends and their parents, and talk with those parents about their approach to supervision and their stance on substance use.
- Encourage your teen to use your home for socializing. Give them a private space if possible but keep an eye on them.
- Assure your child they can call you to be picked up whenever needed, no questions asked.
- Talk about their need for acceptance and to fit

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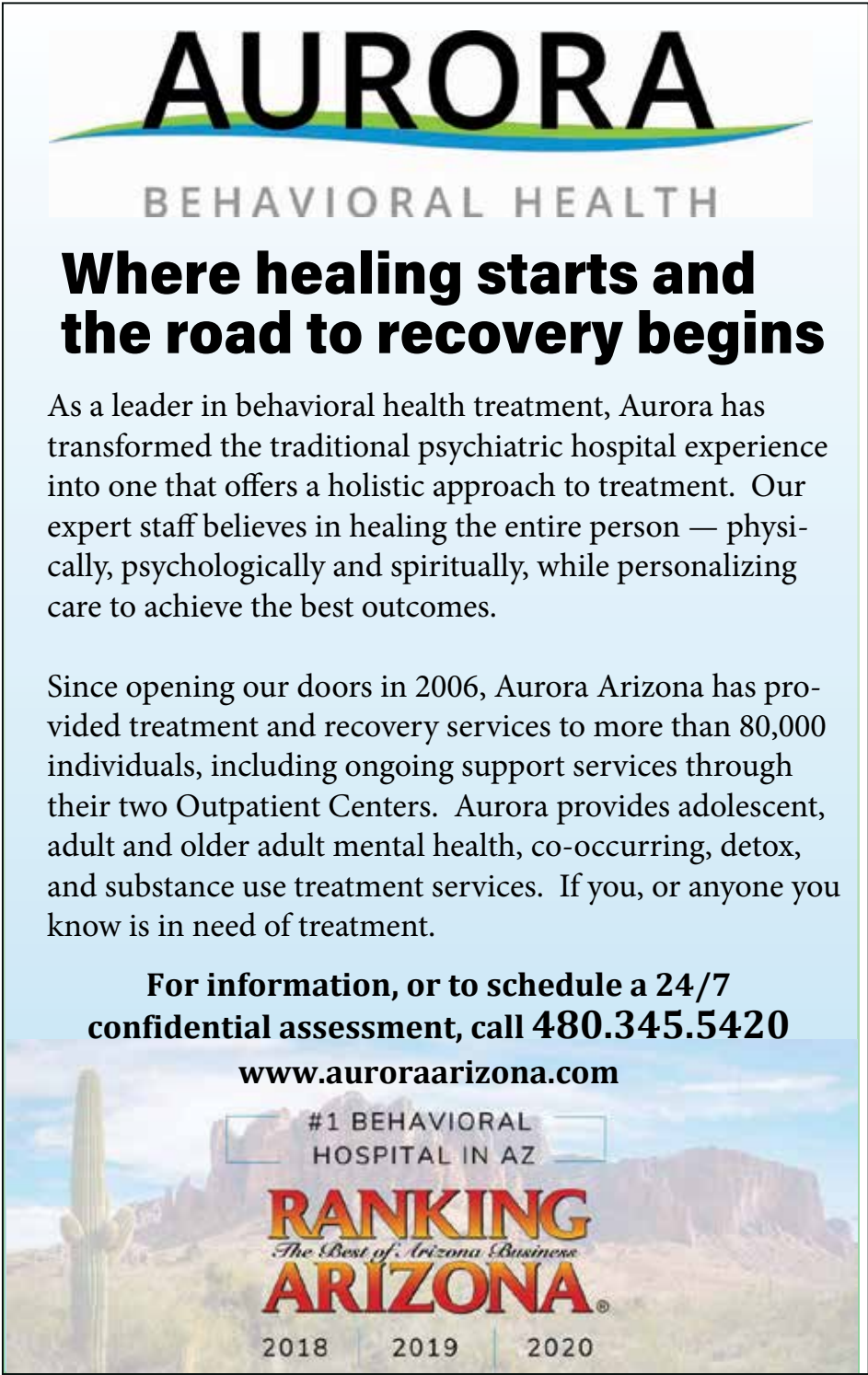
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Valley Hospital 602-952-3939
Teen Challenge of AZ 800-346-7859

RESOURCES

ACT Counseling 602-569-4328
AZ Center for Change 602-253-8488
AZ. Dept. of Health 602-364-2086
AzRHA 602-421-8066
Chandler Valley Hope 480-899-3335
Choices Network 602-222-9444
Compass Recovery Center 800-216-1840
Copper Springs 480-418-4367
Cornerstone Healing Center 480-653-8618
Crisis Response Network 602-222-9444
The Crossroads 602-279-2585
Dept. Problem Gaming 800-NEXTSTEP
Desert Drug Dog 602-908-2042
Fit FOUR Recovery 480) 828-7867
Governor's Office Youth, Faith & Family 602-542-4043
Hunkapi Programs 480- 393-0870
Lafrontera -EMPACT 800-273-8255
River Source 480-827-0322
Scottsdale Providence 480-210-5528
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Therapists/Interventionists/Coaches
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Carey Davidson 928-308-0831
Dr. Dina Evan 602-571-8228
Dr. Dan Glick 480-614-5622
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Center For Life Skills Development 520-229-6220
Co-Anon Family Groups 520-513-5028
Cocaine Anonymous 520-326-2211
Cottonwood Tucson 800-877-4520
Crisis Intervention 520-323-9373
The Mark Youth & Family Care Campus 520-326-6182
Narcotics Anonymous 520-881-8381
Nicotine Anonymous 520-299-7057
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Bipolar Wellness

Child Abuse Hotline – Support & Information

Cocaine Anonymous

Co-Anon

CoDA

COSA

Copper Springs

Crisis Help Line – For Any Kind of Crisis

Crisis Text Line

Crystal Meth Anonymous

Debtors Anonymous

Domestic Violence

Families Anonymous

Gamblers Anonymous

Grief Recovery

Heroin Anonymous

Resources & Helplines

The providers listed are available to assist you. In an emergency dial 911

Marijuana Anonymous	800-766-6779
NDMDA Depression Hotline – Support Group	800-826-3632
Narcotics Anonymous/Phoenix	480-897-4636
Narcotics Anonymous/Casa Grande	520-426-0121
Narcotics Anonymous/Flagstaff	928-255-4655
Narcotics Anonymous/Prescott	928-458-7488
Narcotics Anonymous/Tucson	520-881-8381
Nar-Anon Family Groups	(800) 477-6291
National Youth Crisis Hotline	800-448-4663
Overeaters Anonymous	602-234-1195
PAL (Parents of Addicted Loved Ones)	480-300-4712
Parents Anonymous	602-248-0428
Phoenix Metro SAA	602-735-1681
RAINN (Rape, Abuse, Incest National Network)	RAINN.ORG
Rape Hotline (CASA)	602-241-9010
Sexaholics Anonymous	602-439-3000
Sexual Assault Hotline (24/7, English & Spanish)	800-223-5001
Sex/Love Addicts	602-337-7117
Sex/Love Addicts	520-792-6450
Sex Addicts Anonymous	602-735-1681
S-ANON	480-545-0520
Sober Living AZ	602-737-2458
Suicide Hotline	800-254-HELP
Suicide Prevention Lifeline	800-273-8255
Teen Challenge	888-352-4940
Teen Life Line	800-248-8336

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