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JANUARY 2026

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## PERMA and Post-Traumatic Growth: How Well-Being Can Emerge After Trauma

By Kelli Parks, Interim Director of Clinical Services, Sierra Tucson

In recent times, Positive Psychology has shifted the way we talk about mental health. While traditional approaches rightly focus on reducing symptoms and alleviating distress, positive psychology asks additional and essential questions: how do people move toward well-being, meaning, and fulfillment—especially after adversity; and, what do our adverse experiences give us that facilitate growth? Like the mythical Phoenix, humans have an innate capacity for healing and adapting to adverse experiences.

One of the most widely used frameworks in positive psychology is PERMA, developed by psychologist Martin Seligman. PERMA describes five pillars of well-being: **Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment**. Increasingly, this model is being applied to post-traumatic growth (PTG), a concept describing positive psychological changes that can occur following trauma.

Importantly, post-traumatic growth does not suggest that trauma is beneficial or that suffering

should be minimized. Rather, it recognizes that growth and pain can coexist. PERMA offers a practical, compassionate framework for understanding where growth may occur as individuals heal.

### Positive Emotion: Making Room for More Than Survival

Positive emotion includes experiences such as joy, gratitude, interest, hope, or calm. Following trauma, emotional life can often center on fear, numbness, or sadness. From a trauma-informed

perspective, the goal is not to dilute the validity of painful experiences, but rather to build an expanded emotional range.

Research shows that even brief moments of positive emotion can support nervous system regulation and cognitive flexibility (Fredrickson, 2001). In trauma recovery, positive emotion often appears in small ways: laughter, enjoying a small experience such as a good meal or peaceful sunset, or feeling a moment of relief. These experiences remind the brain and body that all is not lost, and that safety and pleasure are still possible.

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## The Impact of Human Trafficking

By Stacey Sutherland, Program Director at Arizona Anti-Trafficking Network



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January is Human Trafficking Prevention Month, and you may see information that elevates awareness about labor and sex trafficking, but the reality is that trafficking does not stop when January ends. Preventing exploitation and supporting survivors requires ongoing attention, education, and action throughout the year.

Human trafficking is both a local, national, and global issue. Detailed information about human trafficking in the U.S. began being collected when a U.S. federal law, the Trafficking Victim Protection Act - TVPA (2000), created the

definition of labor and sex trafficking and established the parameters for the prosecution of traffickers.

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# A Celebration of Hope, Healing and Gratitude



From left: Dr. Satinder Purewal, Amy Neville (Accepted on her behalf by her father), Koren Hudson, Lee Yaiva, Dr. Adrian Fletcher

It is with full hearts and deep appreciation that we express our gratitude for your attendance at our 16th Annual Phoenix Gratitude for Giving Event at the beautiful Fairmont Princess on Friday, December 5th, 2025.

The celebratory energy shared was truly powerful. As we honored our award winners, their stories offered profound inspiration, showcasing the incredible dedication, compassion, and tireless effort that drives our community. Your presence was a testament to the collective desire we all share to lift one another up and change lives for the better.

We were privileged to witness the deep impact our award recipients have had on those they serve:

- **Spirit Award Winner: Lee Yaiva**
- **Humility Award Winner: Dr. Adrian Fletcher**
- **Hope Award Winner: Amy Neville**  
(Accepted on her behalf by her father)
- **Compassion Award Winner: Koren Hudson**
- **Gratitude Lifetime Achievement: Dr. Satinder Purewal**

*Congratulations again to these outstanding leaders.*

Your actions are a true inspiration to us all. — Sierra Tucson



## Publisher's Note

By Barbara Nicholson-Brown

### Return to Joy

The dictionary defines joy as a deep feeling or condition of happiness or contentment, an outward show of pleasure or delight; rejoicing — that is a perfect description.

Sometimes a sense of joy comes from having a few moments of serenity during a quiet meditation or reflection. It isn't always an outward experience; it can be internal, quite personal and powerful.

I've sensed joy taking my seat in a 12 step meeting, reaching my hand out to another, smiling at someone in the grocery store for no reason. I feel joy when my cat snuggles on my lap.

I have known sadness, pain, and grief; and when coupled with fear, those feelings can be debilitating. I've learned sometimes you have to dive deep into the darkness to find the light— and on the way back up, joy is waiting.

I am learning to cherish the simple joy of being here: healthy, alive, and sober for another day. Joy may not always be at the forefront of my mind, but it is always there when I remember to return to it. I find my way back through gratitude. Gratitude centers me and brings me into the present. It reminds me I'm not the one in charge, shifting my focus back to my blessings.

This New Year, my wish is that you recognize and enjoy all the joy surrounding you today and the days ahead.

*I would love to hear from you! What topics would you like us to cover in 2026?  
Send your ideas and thoughts to [barb@togetheraz.com](mailto:barb@togetheraz.com)*

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# Spotlight on

## Julie Miller, Group CEO for Valley Hospital and Quail Run Behavioral Health

- **What early career experiences led to your focus on behavioral health?**

In college I volunteered with SMI adults in a clubhouse program in Boulder, CO and found working with this population to be so rewarding. I was able to help them function better in society, helped with care coordination and taught them to cook. I then worked as a BHT in a psychiatric hospital when I returned to Phoenix and loved working with crisis and high acuity populations. This led to graduate school and becoming an LPC.

- **What are the main ideas that guide your leadership as Group CEO of Quail Run and Valley Hospital?**

First I would say patient care always comes first. We have to function with the mindset that our job is to help people find mental health and substance use healing and recovery regardless of their presentation, behavior, frequency in care etc. Every patient deserves excellent care that includes a respectful and dignified experience. As leaders our job is to take great care of our teams so that they can take great care of our patients. I make it a point to take down barriers so that we are working harder to say “yes” rather than working hard to say “no”.

- **How do you make sure both hospitals have a culture of caring, responsibility, and teamwork?**

Both hospitals have great teams that work hard to provide an excellent culture. This starts with trustworthy and supportive leadership who model the culture you want from your staff. It means hiring staff that are accountable to treat our patients, their families, each other, and the community with care, dignity, and respect. We must listen and adapt to the needs of our teams and keep them engaged. Also, regular appreciation and celebrations allow for the teams to take a break from their daily stress and have a little fun.

- **What are the most positive improvements you've put in place since you became CEO?**

The culture of “yes” has been very powerful in creating facilities that make it easy for anyone to seek help. We have made small changes to meet regulatory requirements which leads us to a safer and more therapeutic hospitals. Maintaining a culture where staff want to come to work has led to decreased turnover and better patient care and safety.

- **How are Quail Run and Valley Hospital meeting the growing demand for mental health services?**

Both hospitals provide specialized programming to support different populations here in AZ. With Quail having adolescent services and geriatric services along with the adults. Valley Hospital has a women’s trauma program, a men’s trauma program, and substance use detox and rehab services for adults in addition to the general adult programs.

Outpatient services (IOP/PHP) are available for patients to start from the community or as a step-down after inpatient stabilization. We assist with transportation at both hospitals and work to engage in mitigating any issues related to social determinants of health. Both hospitals are working to expand to support the needs of the community.

- **What particular team success made you feel the most proud?**

We have experienced a lot of changes this year. The team has done an amazing job navigating that. They successfully transitioned from paper charting to electronic medical records, a process that is difficult and they did it with grace and ease at both hospitals.

- **How important are partnerships with the community in helping your hospitals achieve their mission?**

Community partnerships are one of the most important things we can focus on to achieve our mission. It is our job to remove barriers and work closely with the community to ensure all patients get the services they need. This goes back to our “yes” culture. We work hard to make sure all partners feel comfortable coming to our facilities 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Julie Miller is a Licensed Professional Counselor. She has a bachelor’s degree in psychology and a masters degree in clinical psychology. She has worked in the behavioral health field for 27 years. She has grown from clinician into leadership and is currently the Group CEO for Valley Hospital and Quail Run Behavioral Health. Julie has worked with all populations in behavioral health, specializing in high acuity and seriously mentally ill adults. Over the years she has provided clinical supervision for professional licensure and has provided training in many topics including understanding and treating mental illness, post crisis discharge planning and community engagement. <https://valleyhospital-phoenix.com/> <https://quailrunbehavioral.com/>



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# The Mental Health Benefits of Decluttering

By Amy Tilley, PsyD

## January. New Year. New Month.

New opportunities to write a new chapter in our books! New opportunities to stick to the new year's resolutions that we all make, right? It is also the middle of winter (at least by the date on the calendar) and you may be experiencing cabin fever, the winter blues, or even seasonal affective disorder. Are you running out of things to do with your family? Are the kids "done" with their toys already? Then it is time to declutter!

Decluttering is defined as: "to remove mess or clutter from (a place)." (Source: Dictionary.com) It is different from cleaning, in the sense you take the time to remove items from your space that may no longer serve a purpose. This can be done in every room of your house — room by room. And the new year is a great time to tackle the entire house, and donate to an organization in need of clothing, kitchen items, decorations, children's toys, the list goes on and on.

There are mental health benefits to decluttering your space, the primary ones being: reducing stress levels, improving focus, and boosting your mood and sense of self control.

- **Reduce stress levels:** if you live in a cluttered, messy environment, your stress levels may be higher. Clearing out unwanted items and organizing your space creates a sense of calm and order and can help you feel less anxious.
- **Improve your focus and productivity:** having too much stuff in an area that you need to focus in can create distractions and have a negative effect on your brain's ability to concentrate. By decluttering your desk (at home and/or work) you are clearing up brain space to improve your ability to focus and complete tasks in a timely and efficient manner.
- **Boost your mood and self-esteem:** decluttering your space gives you a sense of accomplishment and it can release that feel-good hormone, dopamine!
- **Gives you a sense of self-control:** deciding what to keep and what to get rid of allows you to take charge of your environment. This can boost your self-confidence and help you accomplish other tasks in other aspects of your life.
- **Improves your relationships:** Clutter and a messy environment at home can cause tension among family members. If you all work together to maintain an organized space, you may find yourself communicating better and feel better about having guests over for a night of fun.



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- **Provides a sense of altruism:** by decluttering and creating piles to donate provides you with a sense of altruism: having concern for the well-being of others without expecting anything in return. Decluttering and giving your unwanted goods to charity is an altruistic behavior that many people will benefit from. Check out the organizations in your area that need household items or clothing for the members that use their services.

## Did you know there are methods of decluttering?

Here are a few to give you an idea of where to start, as decluttering the entire house can feel a bit overwhelming.

- The **12-12-12** method: find 12 items to throw away, 12 items to donate, and 12 items to put back in their proper place in your house. This takes things to a smaller, more manageable scale.
- The **333** method for clothing: choose 33 items to wear for 3 months (including accessories, outerwear, and shoes). This gives you an idea of what is in your closet, what you enjoy wearing, and what you really don't like to wear! Donate some of those "I'll never wear that again" items to a local charity.
- The **10-10-10** method: focus on 10 items in 10 different spots over 10 days. This is like the 12-12-12 method, allowing you to focus on small areas at a time, lowering your stress level about decluttering everything in sight.

Next time you feel overwhelmed at the amount of stuff in your home or office, don't fret! Take some of these tips and try them. Get your family involved. Kids can absolutely help with decluttering their bedroom and toys; having them donate to an organization teaches them the importance of service to other and practicing basic human kindness. Once you have finished decluttering, take a moment to notice how your mental health has changed now that you have a clean, organized home to enjoy!

Be well and Happy New Year!

Amy Tilley, PsyD. has 20 years in the mental health and addiction recovery field. Her clinical interests include working with young adults and adults diagnosed with co-occurring conditions. Desert Star Addiction Recovery Center. Visit [desertstarARC.com](http://desertstarARC.com) /call 520-638-6000



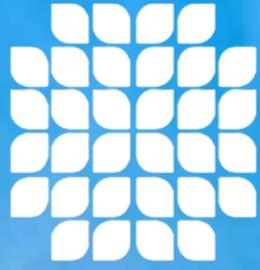
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# The Power of Love

## A Hushabye Nursery Success Story



Jessica made the courageous decision to begin her recovery just before giving birth to her son, Jeremiah. When he arrived, she felt an overwhelming determination to heal and become the best mother she could be. While in the nursery, Jessica developed a safety plan to take her son home and continue outpatient treatment.

Despite her progress, DCS determined that additional time in recovery would be needed before approving her plan, and Jeremiah was removed from her care. Instead of letting this setback derail her, Jessica remained focused on recovery. She worked tirelessly with her Hushabye care team, secured employment, and built a stable, nurturing environment for her son.

After several months of dedication, Jessica achieved all of her goals and Jeremiah was returned to her custody. On November 1, 2025 Jessica celebrated 11 months in recovery by speaking at and attending **Hushabye's Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star** fundraising event with baby Jeremiah. This was a joyful milestone that reflects how far they have both come. Jessica is an inspiring example of resilience, hope, and the power of compassionate support.

Be sure to check out the link below to hear her story from Jessica herself. Everyone at Hushabye Nursery is proud of her and all the hard work she's done. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r1qF1tYD1xc>

## Pregnant and Struggling with Substance Use?



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### **Engagement: Reconnecting with Presence and Strength**

Engagement refers to a deeply present immersion in activities that grip our attention and can create a sense of “flow.” Flow can be described as a state of complete focus that energizes where one feels effective and can lessen self-consciousness. Trauma can impair this capacity by causing hypervigilance, dissociation, or exhaustion.

As healing progresses, many people rediscover activities that anchor them in the present moment—artistic endeavors, physical activity, seeking knowledge or time with nature. This can support recovery by shifting attention away from rumination on the past and onto the present, lived moment— helping us reconnect with strength and efficacy.

### **Relationships: Healing and Deepening Connection**

Relationships are the crux of both trauma and healing. Trauma often involves interpersonal wounds or leads to withdrawing from others. Post-traumatic growth includes meaningful shifts in how survivors relate to others, increasing empathy, maintaining more robust boundaries, and greater emotional attunement.

This does not mean someone has to gather a large circle of connections; rather, a few reliable and strong supportive connections offer opportunity for validation, co-regulation, and belonging—all essential to recovery. In fact, many experiences becoming more discerning and intentional about their connections following trauma.

### **Meaning: Rebuilding a Sense of Purpose**

Trauma can damage our perception of safety, justice, and self. Within the PERMA model, meaning refers to being a part of something greater than oneself. In post-traumatic growth, meaning is not about rationalizing harm, but about integrating experience into a larger self-story, where one can make something positive from the ashes.

Some find meaning through activities that contribute to a greater good, such as advocacy or volunteering. Others find they are able to sharpen their own awareness of personal values. Research suggests that meaning-making plays a central role in adjusting adaptively after trauma (Park, 2010). Importantly, meaning often surfaces gradually with perspective and cannot be rushed.

### **Accomplishment: Restoring Agency and Confidence**

Accomplishment involves setting goals and the resulting sense of competence. Trauma often renders one feeling powerless or feeble. Restoring a sense of achievement helps return one’s sense of agency.

"By providing a framework of well-being versus pathology, **PERMA allows individuals to envision existence beyond survival.**

It honors both the truth of suffering and humanity’s profound capacity for adaptation."

In post-traumatic growth, accomplishments may be intensely personal: completing therapy, returning to work, setting boundaries, or navigating daily life with increased confidence. Every accomplishment reached affirms the belief, “I can act, choose, and move forward,” refuting shame and powerlessness.

### **PERMA as a Framework for Growth Following Trauma**

PERMA does not take the place of trauma treatment. Likewise, growth does not occur in a linear manner across these five concepts. Survivors may notice growth in meaning before positive feelings return, or relational progress before a profound sense of achievement. The flexibility of this model makes it particularly helpful in trauma-informed care, as each individual story is unique.

By providing a framework of well-being versus pathology, PERMA allows individuals to envision existence beyond survival. It honors both the truth of suffering and humanity’s profound capacity for adaptation.

Trauma can change people— but it does not decide the limits of who they can heal and evolve into after. The PERMA model provides a hope restoring, evidence-based structure for understanding how well-being, connection, and purpose can return even after harrowing events.

**Learn more at [www.sierratucson.com](http://www.sierratucson.com)**

#### ***Kelli Parks, Interim Director of Clinical Services***

Kelli Parks is a specialty trauma therapist at Sierra Tucson who provides EMDR, trauma-focused CBT, and other integrated modalities to promote healing and traumatic growth. Kelli has worked in outpatient, inpatient, and residential settings since 2002. Kelli has worked with children and families connected with the child welfare system and worked with system partners to help those families heal. Kelli has worked extensively in the past with women experiencing postpartum mood disorders, as well. Kelli believes in a strength-based, holistic approach to recovery. She has a passion for maternal mental health as well as veteran and first responder mental health. Kelli received her BA in Psychology from the University of AZ and her Masters in Professional Counseling from Grand Canyon University,



In her free time, Kelli enjoys raising her two spirited girls with her husband, reading, weightlifting, and caring for their four rescue animals ( two dogs and two cats). When she has the time, Kelli likes to volunteer with local animal shelters.

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## Human Trafficking from page 1

Human trafficking impacts individuals across all our communities and invokes deep feelings and reactions. Quite often the terms human trafficking and human smuggling are used interchangeably, but they are fundamentally different crimes.

**Human smuggling** involves a person who consents to being moved illegally across an international border. In these cases, the relationship typically ends once the individual reaches their destination and the agreed-upon fee is paid. While smuggling is illegal, it is a crime against the state because it violates immigration laws.

**Human trafficking**, on the other hand, is a crime against a person. Trafficking involves force, fraud, or coercion or any commercial sex act involving a minor. The purpose is ongoing exploitation, including forced labor, or commercial sex. Movement is not required; trafficking can occur entirely within one city, neighborhood, or home.

**"Quite often the terms human trafficking and human smuggling are used interchangeably, but they are fundamentally different crimes."**



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Arizona is not immune from trafficking issues and offers countless attractions that draw visitors from around the world. With warm weather most of the year, an influx of seasonal visitors during the winter months, and access to stunning outdoor destinations like the Grand Canyon, Sedona, and Flagstaff, the state remains a major tourism hub.

Arizona also hosts large-scale sporting events and gatherings, including Spring Training, the Fiesta Bowl, the Phoenix Open, NASCAR events, and at various times large-scale events like the Super Bowl and Final Four. In addition, the state is a frequent choice for major conventions and trade shows. Combined with a strong transportation infrastructure, including multiple interstate highways and an extensive freeway system, travel in and out of the state is fast and accessible.

It is important to understand that human trafficking, particularly sex trafficking, is driven by demand. Where large numbers of visitors, events, and easy transportation exist, the demand from sex buyers increases creating greater risk for exploitation.

In both sex and labor trafficking, the trafficker's primary goal is power and control. They exploit a person's circumstances, insecurities, and vulnerabilities, often targeting individuals facing economic hardship, instability, or violence at home. Traffickers may present themselves as a source of safety, security, or opportunity, only to use threats, intimidation, or psychological coercion to maintain control. They isolate victims, undermine trust in law enforcement, shift blame onto the victim, and normalize exploitation, including sexual violence. Economic abuse, debt bondage, and the use of privilege or hierarchy among victims further reinforce control. While the tactics vary, the intent remains the same: to dominate, exploit, and maintain power.

Labor trafficking may involve individuals whose identification documents have been confiscated, who have little freedom of movement, or who are closely monitored. Warning signs can include excessively long work hours without

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breaks, unsafe or hazardous working conditions, false promises about wages or job opportunities, and misleading or deceptive contract terms. Traffickers often use threats against victims or their loved ones, manipulation through debt that can never realistically be repaid, and create conditions where escape feels impossible.

Sex trafficking involves force, fraud, or coercion, or any commercial sex act involving a minor. Warning signs may include individuals who are controlled by another person, such as a pimp, manager, or romantic partner, or who are closely monitored and unable to speak freely. Many want to leave commercial sex but feel trapped due to fear, threats, debt, or lack of safe alternatives. Sex trafficking can occur in a variety of settings, including illicit massage businesses, bars, strip clubs, or online. Control over movement, communication, finances, or basic needs is often present, and exploitation may be normalized or minimized by the trafficker.

### — Resources —

Help is available, and no one needs to navigate this alone. Across Arizona, there are several organizations and resources dedicated to fighting human trafficking and supporting survivor.

One key resource is the Arizona Human Trafficking Hotline, launched on February 1, 2023, which provides a safe way for victims, survivors, and community members to report tips, ask questions, or connect to services.

The hotline is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week at **1-877-4AZ-TIPS (1-877-429-8477)**.

Additional information and support can be found on the following websites **[www.sextraffickinghelp.com](http://www.sextraffickinghelp.com)** and **[www.altoproject.org](http://www.altoproject.org)**.

The Arizona Anti-Trafficking Network (AATN) is proud to be part of this statewide response, and collaborates with partners to provide education, training, and survivor-centered support throughout Arizona.

**Visit <https://aatn.org> to learn more AATN**

# Committing to Positive Mental Health in the New Year: A Therapeutic Perspective

By Ramsen Kasha



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for those in recovery or managing mental health conditions and those of us who have the opportunity to work with them.

Positive mental health is more than the absence of symptoms. It is the ongoing practice of self-awareness, emotional regulation, connection, and purpose. Like physical health, mental health requires consistency, patience, and compassion. The new year offers a natural pause, a chance to reflect on what is working and what needs adjustment. It is not about striving for perfection but about showing up for yourself each day.

## Why Commitment Matters

Progress in mental health and recovery is rarely linear, though we may hope it was. There are moments of insight and growth, but also setbacks and fatigue. A commitment to mental health means staying engaged, even when things feel hard. Commitment shifts the focus from short-term motivation to long-term values. It's a decision to care for yourself, even when it's uncomfortable. Shame, self-criticism, and avoidance can derail progress, but commitment allows us to persevere through tough moments and accept the process, not just aim for an end goal.

## Reframing New Year's Resolutions

Traditional New Year's resolutions often fail because they are rigid and rooted in self-judgment. Mental health resolutions, however, can focus on flexibility, curiosity, and self-compassion. They are not about "fixing" ourselves but about creating supportive habits and healthier relationships with ourselves and others.

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## A few therapeutic resolutions to consider:

### 1. Commit to Consistency Over Intensity

Choose consistency over extremes. Whether it's attending therapy, meditating, exercising, or practicing other coping skills, consistency is key. Recovery and emotional growth happen through regular, small actions, not by trying to make radical changes all at once. We can build on our commitment to ourselves if, no matter how busy or frustrated we get, we identify at least one positive thing we can do for ourselves every day. Even five minutes of grounding or journaling once a week can make a difference.

### 2. Practice Emotional Awareness

Instead of avoiding emotions, work to notice them. Emotional awareness helps build emotional intelligence and reduces unhealthy coping behaviors. Simple habits like naming your emotions or sharing one feeling per day with someone you trust can deepen self-awareness.

### 3. Set Boundaries That Support Recovery

The new year is a time to reassess relationships and environments. Healthy boundaries are protections, not punishments. Setting boundaries might mean limiting contact with people who enable harmful behaviors or restructuring your work-life balance. These boundaries protect your mental health and help create space for healing.

### 4. Replace Self-Criticism with Self-Compassion

Often the most important boundaries we need to set are with ourselves and our self-talk. Shame and harsh self-judgment can hinder growth. We often are more merciless toward ourselves than we would be about those for whom we care. A powerful resolution is to treat yourself with the same kindness you would offer a close friend. When you make a mistake, reframe it as an opportunity for growth, practice self-forgiveness, and acknowledge your efforts rather than focusing on perfection.

### 5. Strengthen Connection

Isolation can trigger mental health struggles and substance use issues. Commit to connection by engaging in group therapy, reaching out to a sponsor, or simply allowing yourself to be vulnerable with others. Allowing ourselves not to be "fine" when those closest to us ask how we are doing is a terrifying but powerful gift. Connection does not need to be perfect; but it requires presence and authenticity.

### 6. Embrace Progress, Not Perfection

Commitment to health and healing is an ongoing process. Let go of the idea that it has a deadline. The goal is not to "arrive" at wellness, but to continue making choices that support it. Difficult days and setbacks are inevitable, but each day is a chance to recommit to yourself and your healing journey.

As we step into the new year, treat your mental health like a relationship. Understand that it requires attention, patience, and care and gift it to yourself. Every healthy choice, no matter how small, is an investment in our future self. Our commitment matters. The new year does not ask us to become someone else. It challenges us to live by the motto of **"I am worth the effort it takes to care for myself, even when it is uncomfortable or inconvenient."** It invites us to show up more fully as we already are; human, resilient, and worthy of healing.

Ramsen Kasha is Chief Clinical Officer at Sahara Wellness Center. Visit <https://www.saharawc.com/>

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# When Gratitude Takes Root



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As the trees grow bare and the chill settles in, I'm reminded that the most important growth often happens beneath the surface. The world above may look still, but the roots are alive-reaching deeper, anchoring stronger. Gratitude has become that root system for me. Unseen by many, but holding me steady through every changing season.

In my earliest days of recovery, gratitude felt impossible. I was weighed down by shame, fear, and the belief that I didn't deserve good things. For so long, I compared my "behind the scenes" to everyone else's "highlight reels." I saw people living lives that looked effortless, full, and free, while I was still fighting to take my next breath. But comparison truly is the thief of joy.

Over time, I've met people whose stories broke my heart— those who have known grief so deep it seemed unbearable, and yet they radiate peace. People with little in their hands but so much light in their eyes. They taught me that joy doesn't come from what we have, but from what we hold with gratitude in our hearts. *Gratitude is the quiet miracle that turns "not enough" into abundance.*

What I've come to understand is that the roots of gratitude do not grow in easy soil. They take hold in broken ground- in the soil of suffering, watered by tears, and fed by surrender. It's there, in the pain we wish we could escape, that gratitude begins to dig deep and find its strength. The frost of our changing seasons can't reach roots that have learned to grow beneath the surface of hardship.

This month, the one that begins with the day I marry the love of my life, my heart feels anchored in a gratitude deeper than I ever thought possible. The same girl who once believed she was unworthy of love, trust, or the true peace of recovery now stands in the warmth of a love built on honesty, steadfastness, and grace. This life is a miracle. One that grew quietly underground, nurtured by mercy and strengthened through every difficult season that came before. Anchored by my daily surrender, doing the deep work of recovery, and taking it one day at a time.

To the parents reading this: I know how hard it is to watch someone you love struggle. You may wonder if anything is taking root beneath the chaos. But healing often happens in unseen places. Gratitude grows there too- in the smallest acts of grace, in the hope that flickers even on the hardest days.

I used to cry out to God, asking why He left me in certain valleys so long, why He didn't lift me out when I was desperate to escape. But now I understand: He was planting something. Seeds that could only grow in the dark, quiet soil of surrender. He was tending to things I couldn't yet see, and watering them with tears I thought were wasted.

Today, I can look back and see the flowers growing in that valley- proof that even the most painful seasons were never barren after all.

As I begin a new chapter I once thought was out of reach, my heart is full. Not because life is perfect, but because it's real. Because I get to live it- sober, present, and grateful.

When others see weeds, I've learned to see wishes. And when I pause long enough to say thank you- for the pain that shaped me, the love that found me, and the grace that keeps me, I remember that deep roots are never reached by the frost.

And I am grateful beyond words for the wildflowers I see blooming in the valley I once thought was barren land. — Jamie, In Recovery

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# From the Mat

## January: A Season of Renewal, Not Pressure

By Alexandra Daffner

January often arrives with loud messages about “new year, new you.”

For those in recovery, this time of year can bring up mixed emotions—hope, reflection, gratitude, and sometimes pressure to change everything all at once. In recovery, we know that true transformation doesn’t come from force or perfection. It comes from intention, consistency, and compassion.



Recovery teaches us that every day is a new beginning. January simply gives us a collective pause to reflect on where we’ve been and where we want to go. Intention setting in recovery is not about rigid goals or unrealistic expectations—it’s about aligning our actions with our values and choosing what supports our well-being, one day at a time.

Unlike resolutions, intentions leave room for being human. They allow flexibility for hard days and celebrate progress without demanding perfection. An intention might be choosing presence over perfection, connection over isolation, or self-trust over self-criticism. These intentions act as anchors, gently guiding us back when life feels overwhelming.

Mind-body practices like yoga, breathwork, meditation, and sound healing can be powerful tools in this process. Movement and mindfulness help regulate the nervous system, quiet the mind, and create space to listen inward. When the body feels safe, clarity follows. This is where intention setting becomes embodied—not just something we think about, but something we feel and live.



January is also a time to honor how far we’ve already come. Recovery is not linear, and growth often happens quietly. Showing up, staying connected, asking for help, and choosing healthier coping tools are all victories worth acknowledging. Before setting intentions for the future, it’s important to recognize the strength it took to get here.

To support this process, we are hosting a Manifesting & Intention Setting Workshop on January 3rd. This experience is designed specifically with recovery and nervous system care in mind. Through guided reflection, gentle movement, breathwork, and sound healing, participants will have the opportunity to release what no longer serves them and intentionally call in what they want to cultivate in the year ahead. This is not about “fixing” yourself—it’s about reconnecting with your inner wisdom and setting intentions that feel grounded, attainable, and supportive.



Community plays a vital role in recovery, especially during transitions like the start of a new year. Gathering with others who understand the journey reminds us that we are not alone and that healing happens in connection. Whether you are new to recovery or have years behind you, intention setting can help bring focus and meaning to the path ahead. As we step into January, may we approach the year with gentleness. May we replace pressure with presence and self-judgment with curiosity. Recovery isn’t

about becoming someone new—it’s about remembering who you are and continuing to choose yourself, one intentional moment at a time.



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# Kids and Screen Time

*Do you ever find yourself arguing with your kids about screen time? You are not alone!*



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Often, families' discussions about screens feel like a power struggle, full of negotiations and negatives. But they don't have to be. Screens are all around us, and help us work, laugh, learn, and escape from stress.

Therefore, like you talk about food, sleep, school, or any other part of life, it's important to find time to talk about media and technology. It can be anything from the latest movie or video game or something you hear about in the news. The key is to be open-minded, listen to our kids, and guide them without shame and blame. Even young kids can learn from conversations about online safety, how to recognize marketing, and being smart about what videos they watch.

Children in elementary school may enjoy sharing their emerging opinions about technology.

### *Ideas for how to do it:*

- **Be an influencer detective (age 6+):** If your child likes videos created by influencers, watch along with them and ask: "Why did they say that? Do you think someone paid them to put that in their video? Are they being real, or showing off? Do you think they get more 'likes' or earn more money that way?"

- **Family movie night (all ages):** Pick a movie or show to watch together. Have conversations about the characters, what happened, and what you agree with and disagree with.

### **Technology can't take up every minute of our downtime.**

We need a good night's sleep, time to talk to each other, and time to share food and laughs. Think about the family routines your family loves, whether it's chatting on car rides, family meals, or dancing together, and make time for it. These are the things that we need to ensure tech doesn't crowd out — for kids or parents.

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### *Ideas for how to do it:*

- **No-phone zones (all ages):** Together with your family, decide on rooms of your home or times of day when you don't want technology to invade, such as at the dinner table, in the car, or before bedtime.

- **Quiet those devices (all ages):** Set do not disturb, focus mode, or other settings on devices so that unnecessary notifications don't come through when you want quiet time.

- **Device free meals (all ages):** Families who decide there's "no tech at the table" can focus more on each other, having conversations, and enjoying the food they are eating.

### **Continuing Conversations**

When kids are young, we talk to them about street safety, swimming safety, and other rules that come with exploring the world. Safety rules for the digital world should include:

- 1) privacy about names, addresses, phone numbers, and passwords,
- 2) not chatting with strangers (who can sometimes pose as kids),
- 3) not clicking links or downloading things that can carry viruses, and
- 4) unsafe websites that can show sexy or violent things.

Kids can be impulsive and curious, so it's important to teach them these rules ahead of time, before they stumble into trouble. Having kid-safe filters and protections on devices or Wi-Fi also helps.

Since the invention of social media, parents have shared billions of photos of their children online — often without kids' permission. While these photos can share joy, parents say they also can lead to negative social comparisons about picture-perfect parenting. These photos also contain a lot of data about children's faces and locations. Experts recommend asking for your kids' permission before posting photos or stories about them online. This helps teach children about consent and privacy, which may help them be a more responsible social media user as a teen. Source: Samsha.gov



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# One January at a Time

If April Showers spring May Flowers,  
what does Dry January® spring?



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By Marlo Archer

**Alcohol Change UK** (<https://alcoholchange.org.uk/>) is the organization that trademarked Dry January®, a challenge to refrain from drinking alcohol for the entire month of January.

According to them, taking time off from drinking alcohol, brings immediate positive changes. This short break from booze will improve your sleep, concentration, memory, and energy level. Your ability to feel thirst accurately will improve, and all the water you drink *will not only reduce heartburn, but will help you shed pounds without even really trying*. On top of that, you'll even start looking better as your pores become smaller and your skin gets softer and less flushed. Other benefits you won't see or feel include reducing your risk of cancer, stroke, heart and liver disease and diabetes.

You may already be days or weeks into your own Dry January challenge, since this is not a new activity. Reports of individuals challenging themselves in this way date back to the early 2000's. The UK charity formalized it in 2013, and has been promoting it ever since, having celebrated it's 10th anniversary in 2023.

If you have not already started, feel free to jump in right now and just do 31 consecutive sober days if you'd like to experience the benefits. If you are fastidious and the idea of starting mid-month is just too messy to consider, all the benefits will be there if you — just do it in February instead. Or March. Or December. Heck, the benefits are even more pronounced if you do it for January AND February. AND March. AND December. AND NEXT JANUARY.

Whoa! Wait a minute, there. Slow down. We were only talking about one month without alcohol, not doing ALL the months without alcohol. That might sound impossible. It's one thing to consider forgoing adult beverages after the winter holidays, but to think of a life without alcohol might sound outrageous.

Okay, then, let's just stick to the idea of having a Dry January®. Spend one month without alcohol and enjoy the changes. You'll get a better looking face. Your gym workouts will go better. You won't feel so yucky. Your blood pressure and your heart rate will both improve. You will be more rested, have more energy, remember things better, lose your keys less often, and be overall less likely to die.

Unless, of course, you are physically addicted to alcohol. In that case, Dry January® could actually kill you. Yes. The sudden and complete withdrawal from alcohol, for a person who is clinically dependent on alcohol, can be fatal. Don't just try Dry January®. Instead, talk with a doctor first about slowly reducing alcohol safely, then try it when your body is strong enough to be without alcohol for a month.

If alcohol has become any sort of annoyance for you, consider experiencing some time without it. You may need to do one hour at a time, one day at a time, or one January at a time. In any case, it's easier if you do it with someone, so ask a friend or two to do it with you.



Dr. Marlo Archer is been a licensed psychologist specializing in Psychodrama.





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## Entering Adulthood: Getting Help for Mental and Substance Use Disorders

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**42%**  
of those with mental illness went untreated



**5.1 million**  
young adults reported having a substance use disorder



**87%**  
of those with substance use disorders went untreated

### Common Signs



**Trouble sleeping or oversleeping**



**Loss of interest in hobbies + friends**



**Feelings of anxiousness**



**Changes in overall energy levels**



**Changes in appetite + weight**



**Feelings of hopelessness**



**Difficulty in daily functioning**



**Extreme mood changes**



**Thoughts of suicide**

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# When do you get to be enough?

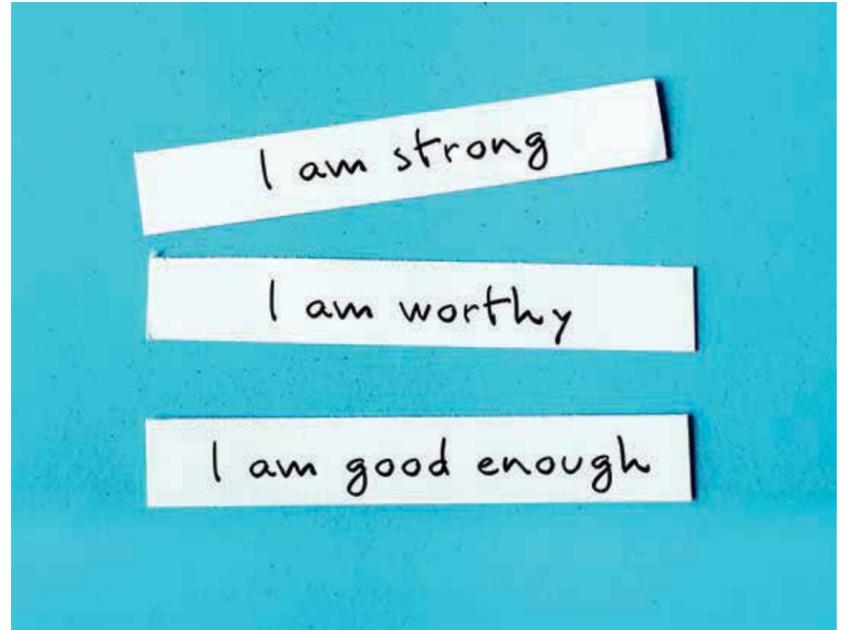
By Alan Cohen

After coaching many people over many years, I notice certain core issues that most clients face, life themes they are in the process of mastering. The most common issue is the feeling, “I am not enough.” This belief spills into other sectors of life, such as, “I do not have enough” or “I do not do enough.” While it appears that various different elements of our life are not enough, they can all be traced back to the belief, “I am not enough.”

We were all born knowing we are enough. Little children do not have self-esteem issues. They are bold, unapologetic, ask for what they want, and bear no need to prove themselves. Then parents, elder siblings, teachers, clergy, or other authority figures teach them all they have to do to become worthy. They harp on the child’s faults rather than celebrating the child’s strengths. Then feelings of not-enoughness begin to creep into the child’s mind, and eventually displace the inner confidence they were born with.

A friend of mine sent her son to the first day of kindergarten, and he came home crying. “What happened?” she asked. “The teacher passed out a coloring page of a clown,” he explained. “I drew a green nose on the clown. When the teacher saw it, she scolded me, ‘Everyone knows that a clown’s nose is red.’”

Such early invalidation can develop into a lifetime pattern of trying to prove yourself. My client Dave is a very successful professor at a prestigious university. He has gathered massive accolades, written books, lectures to the profession, and sits on respected committees. Dave is beyond the age of retirement, but he feels he needs to keep working, although he doesn’t much enjoy it. He believes he still needs to do more to prove himself. I told him, “Dave, if you never did anything else in your life, all the amazing things you have done would be enough.” Now Dave is starting to ease up on his self-demands, and enjoy his life rather than trying to earn more stars.



iStock Credit: ariya j

Take a moment now to consider what you do that proceeds from a sense of enoughness, and what you do that proceeds from not-enoughness. You will probably notice that when you proceed from not-enoughness, you never end up with enoughness. An empty self-image is a bottomless black hole you will never fill by doing more.

When, on the other hand, your proceed from knowing you are enough, everything you do from that mindset works. Because you are already enough, you don’t need to do anything to make you more enough.

My client Susan suffered from a lack of self-worth. After coaching, she fashioned herself a bracelet with the letters WWWS—standing for, “What Would a Worthy Susan Do?” When Susan has a choice to make, she looks at the bracelet, takes a moment to consult her inner guidance, and then acts from her worthy self. Susan reports that her lack of self-worth has been crumbling quickly, giving way to newfound confidence and success.

You might like to make yourself a similar bracelet, or post the letters on your phone or computer desktop, on the wall over your desk, or on your refrigerator. When you consult your worthy self regularly, that becomes your dominant energy and results.

While I have helped clients formulate many affirmations, they boil down to the three powerful truths below. Please feel free to use them for yourself:

**I am enough.  
I have enough.  
I do enough.**

Enough for now.

Alan Cohen, M.A., is the author of 31 popular inspirational books, including the bestselling *A Course in Miracles Made Easy*, the award-winning *A Deep Breath of Life*, and the classic *Are You as Happy as Your Dog?* He’s a contributing writer for the New York Times #1 bestselling series *Chicken Soup for the Soul*, and his books have been translated into 32 foreign languages.

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CHECK IN 8:30 - 9:00 AM	Friday, March 6th 2026
ETHICS PRESENTATION 9:00-12:00 PM	Ethics Presentation- 3 CEU Hours <u>Hitting a Home Run with the Board:</u> <u>Avoiding strikes by Understanding Common Pitfalls</u>
CATERED LUNCH 12:00-1:00 PM	9:00-12:00pm
CULTURAL COMPETENCY PRESENTATION 1:00-4:00 PM	Presenter: Tobi Zavala Tobi Zavala was appointed as the Executive Director of the Board of Behavioral Health in July of 2014. Her goals for the Board are to maintain the safety and welfare of the public, ensure applicants and licensees are treated fairly and equitably, and to monitor behavioral health and licensing trends to keep the Board aligned with federal and national standards. Her passion is to ensure that her staff and she strive for continual improvement in Board operations.
<b>COST</b> \$150.00 (\$25.00 PER CEU)	Cultural Competency-3 CEU Hours <u>Unlocking Grief: The Good, the Bad &amp; the Complicated</u>
INCLUDES CATERED LUNCH	1:00-4:00pm
	Presenter: Gigi Veasey LCSW, LIAC, CCBT Gigi Veasey, LCSW, LIAC, CCBT, is a Phoenix-based psychotherapist with 40 years of experience specializing in grief and loss. She conducts workshops, lectures, and one-on-one sessions, emphasizing hope for growth through difficult experiences. Gigi authored "Me After You: Surviving the Loss of a Loved One" (2021) and founded Alcohol Recovery Solutions 25 years ago, helping individuals overcome addiction, depression, anxiety, and trauma while rediscovering their authentic selves.
	Location: The Westward Look Resort; Tucson
Presented By: Desert Star (520) 638-6000	Sponsored By: Constellation Behavioral Health, In Balance, Sierra Tucson, Cottonwood Tucson

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Spiritually Fit- Co-op	602-809-0854	spirituallyfitco-op.com
Brough Stewart, MC, LPC, NCC	602-316-3197	
Steps to Recovery/Konnect	928-649-0077	konnectwellness.org
Valley Hospital	602-952-3939	valleyhospital-phoenix.com
Via Linda Behavioral Hospital	480-476-7210	vialindabehavioral.com
Virtue Recovery Center	866-338-6977	virtuerecoverycitywest.com
Teen Challenge AZ	602-708-9475	tcaz.org

## Helplines

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)	602-264-1341
Al-Anon	602-249-1257
Tucson Al-Anon Information	520-323-2229
Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACA)	aca-arizona.org
Bipolar Wellness	602-274-0068
Child Abuse Hotline – Support & Information	800-422-4453
Cocaine Anonymous	602-279-3838
Co-Anon	602-697-9550
CoDA	602-277-7991
COSA	480-385-8454
Crisis Help Line – For Any Kind of Crisis	800-233-4357
Crisis Text Line	Text HOME to 741741
Crystal Meth Anonymous	602-235-0955
Debtors Anonymous	800-421-2383
Domestic Violence	800-799-SAFE
Families Anonymous	602-647-5800
Fentanyl Anonymous	520-338-9307
Food Addicts foodaddicts.org	435-764-1461
Gamblers Anonymous	602-266-9784
Grief Recovery	800-334-7606
Heroin Anonymous	602-870-3665
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 Tucson	520-792-6450
Sex Addicts Anonymous	602-735-1681
S-ANON	480-545-0520
Teen Life Line	800-248-8336

## Additional Resources

AZ. Dept. of Health	602-364-2086
AZ Holistic Approach Counseling	602-529-1967
Arizona Opioid Assistance Helpline	888-688-4222
Ericks House	855-894-5658
Desert Drug Dog	602-908-2042
Hunkapi Programs	480-393-0870
Kid in the Corner	kidinthecorner.org
EMPACT/La Frontera	800-273-8255
I Am Teen Strong	480-396-2409
Mental Health Center of America	602-704-2345
PAL Parents of Addicted Loved Ones	palgroup.org
Recovery Café	480-530-7090
TERROS Health	602-685-6000

### TUCSON

ACA	aca-arizona.org
AA	520-624-4183
Al-Anon Info Service	520-323-2229
Anger Management	520-887-7079
Behavioral Awareness Center	520 629 9126
Co-Anon Family Groups	520-513-5028
Cocaine Anonymous	520-326-2211
Cornerstone Behavioral Health	520-222-8268
Cottonwood Tucson	800-877-4520
Crisis Intervention	520-323-9373
Narcotics Anonymous	520-881-8381
Nicotine Anonymous	520-299-7057
Overeaters Anonymous	520-733-0880
Recovery in Motion	520-975-2141
Sex Addicts Anonymous	520-745-0775
Sierra Tucson	800-842-4487
Suicide Prevention	520-323-9372
Teen Challenge	888-352-4940
The Mark Youth and Family Care	520-326-6182
Workaholics Anonymous	520-403-3559

### EDA Meetings

Sat. 10:30 am New Freedom Meeting —  
Pigeon Coop. 4415 S Rural Rd, Ste 8, Tempe  
AZ. Step and big book study.

Thur. 7:00 P.M.

New Happiness Meeting  
Crossroads  
2103 E Southern, Tempe. Rotating format-  
Step, Topic, Big Book, Speaker.

### Refuge Recovery

Wednesday, 6:00-7:00 pm, Red Tree  
Meditation Center, 1234 E 16th St. Tucson  
Saturday, 5:00- 6:30 pm, \*Palo Verde room\*  
Saint Philip's in the Hills Episcopal Church.  
4440 N Campbell Ave., Tucson

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