

Journey To



LIFE

"You have shown me the path of life."
Psalms 16:11



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Editorial Perspective New Every Morning

Jeremiah, when writing the Bible book of Lamentations, reminds us of the Lord's great love, mercies, compassions and faithfulness which are "new every morning" (see Lamentations 3:22,23). Because of this assurance, we can know that God understands and is with us when we need encouragement after relapsing into an addiction. He is not interested in destroying our hope, rather He keeps saying at the beginning of each new day, "You can do it. Don't give up. I am with you and 'I can keep you from falling' (see Jude 1:24).".

Some 12 Step groups offer "One Day" tokens to those who come to their meetings and are just starting or restarting their "sobriety / clean time." Yes, new beginnings are possible "because of God's great love and mercies."

The story is told of two friends who had just finished their shopping. One confessed that no matter how hard she tried she couldn't

stop eating a bag of potato chips every day. The other person noticed three bags of chips in her shopping cart and suggested that she make a decision to not eat any potato chips for just one day. Then decide not to eat any the next day. The challenge wasn't to stop eating the chips forever which would have seemed impossible after many years of eating a bag full a day. Several weeks later they saw each other at the gym and the friend who couldn't stop eating potato chips said she was no longer eating potato chips and after the third day threw them all away.

Each and every new morning / day can be a new beginning. When added together they can lead to weeks, months and years of freedom from obsessive thinking and compulsive harmful behaviors.

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ARMin Mission and Vision

Our Mission:

Promote healing and freedom from harmful practices by providing resources and training to facilitate recovery.

Our Vision:

Healthy people growing in a relationship with Christ by using principles of God's Word and choosing healthful practices aimed at finding freedom from harmful habits and addictive behaviors.

Potential Objectives/Goals:

- Promote healing (individually and corporately) utilizing the healthy, balanced principles of God's Word
- Provide resources to churches and individuals in order to raise awareness and educate regarding the root of dysfunctions that create disunity within individuals, families, churches and communities through unresolved trials, troubles and tragedies
- Train individuals to facilitate ongoing support groups and mentoring in a safe, nurturing environment

We believe that as we heal from life's trials, troubles and tragedies, we become inspired and committed to reach out to others as a result of gratitude for our personal healing; to care for others because our lives are so enriched by Christ's forgiveness; and the blessing of the freedom we have experienced due to His unending grace and mercy.

The Healing Value of the **12** STEPS

Step 2—

“We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.”

Biblical Comparison

“So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”

—Isaiah 41:10 (NIV)

Steps to Christ Chapter
The Sinner’s Need for Christ

Upcoming Events

May
Mental Health Month
May 1-31, 2016
For more information:
www.mentalhealthamerica.net/go/may

National Alcohol- and Other Drug-Related
Birth Defects Awareness Week
May 8-14, 2016
For more information:
www.ncadd.org

World No Tobacco Day
May 31, 2016
For more information:
www.who.int/tobacco/wntd/en

September
Recovery Ministry Training at Health
Summit
September 28 – October 2, 2016
Camp Hope, British Columbia, Canada
<http://www.nadhealthsummit.com/>



12 STEPS to Recovery STEP #2 Testimony

The greater the strong hold of an addiction, the greater the miracle when Jesus Christ through His God-given power provides deliverance. When a person recognizes their great need and lack of power to change their compulsive, harmful addiction – whatever that may be, He can then provide just what is needed to take care of the problem.

Recently, I watched and listened to a sermon by John Maxwell titled, “Problem or a Miracle.” It can be found at the following internet link - <http://www.life.church/watch/problem-or-a-miracle/>. The sermon is based on the report of Jesus’ feeding of the 5,000 plus women and children with a boy’s lunch which consisted of just five loaves of bread and two fish. The problem (need) was great and therefore the miracle was great. The lessons John shares from this great problem (enough food to feed a large crowd) and the resulting miracle illustrates what Jesus Christ, the Highest Power, is able to do when there is a big problem such as a substance or behavioral addiction that enslaves an individual.

When a person thinks they can take care of all their great needs themselves, then the miracle working power of Jesus isn’t needed. It is often only when such a person gives up on their own power and admit they are powerless – Step One that they find the resources – the power greater than themselves that can restore them to sanity (Step Two).

Sanity means to think clearly, avoid rationalizations and self-defeating harmful addictive practices. When an addict decides it’s time to let go of the addictive/compulsive behavior that once served as a way to cope with life’s problems, they can confidently come to Jesus in prayer and the support of friends in recovery with their problem(s). They will find that miracles are waiting for them. He is capable to do more than we can ask, think or imagine because He has the necessary miracle-working power needed (see Ephesians 3:20).

Aiden N

Did You Ever Drive a Volvo?

Both of my grandfathers were alcoholics. My brother died at the age of fifty two of liver disease caused by his use of alcohol. If it had not been for my Sabbath School leader I could have been the next victim of alcohol abuse.

One day Lloyd came to our school and asked to speak to me privately about a serious matter. So we walked out into the parking lot and sat in his Volvo. There he “carefronted” me about some destructive choices I was making. Then he prayed. Result? That one prayer and intervention was an important positive turning point.

I had not spoken with Lloyd for about 35 years. I called Lloyd, now living in Portland, Oregon and asked him if he remembered taking me out of school and talking and praying with me. He said that he didn’t remember it. Then I asked him if he drove a Volvo when I was in the tenth grade. He said that he did. How did I know? I told Lloyd that I still remember seeing the chrome emblem on the dashboard when he prayed for me.

You may never know in this life the difference you are making in the life of a young person. Thank you for taking the time to care for a teenager.

That’s why Steve Case, President, Involve Youth Ministries, and I are producing a manual (set of five books) for parents, youth leaders, and church members. Book one, “A Place To Belong,” is how to provide a safe place that young people love to come to and bring their friends. Book four, “Making Good Choices,” to be completed soon, is about teen chemical dependency and intervention/resources for parents, pastors, and peers.

Hubert Cisneros
Hubert Cisneros is Youth and
Church Ministries Director for the
Mid-America Union Conference of
Seventh-day Adventists, Lincoln, Nebraska



Healing Old Wounds A New Perspective

As a pastor's naive young wife, I was shocked to learn that the first elder of our church was not on speaking terms with the head deacon. Try as we might and pray as we did, all we could do to mediate their differences was get them to shake hands grudgingly—once. Discreet inquiries revealed that the original dispute revolved around who was going to run the church and how long he could hold the leadership position without being usurped by the other. From that experience and from my tenure as a family systems-oriented addictions counselor, I've gained a new perspective on healing old wounds.

Animosities Die Hard

In dysfunctional social systems old animosities die hard. Some go underground, only to resurface at a later date. Hatchets that were once buried have a haunting way of emerging from the grave. The lines of demarcation between factions within a church may persist across generations.

Years ago, when our church building was being renovated, some of the members disagreed about whether or not to purchase new pews. The debate lasted a few months and ended in an uneasy truce. Later, when a new dispute arose, people polarized along the same battle lines as before. New disagreements often serve as lightning rods for the "electrical energy" that has been present all along! Bitterness rises again and again, even though the cause of the original disagreement may be long forgotten.

Similar Patterns

There are similarities between conflicts in families and disputes within churches. It's an established fact that relationship patterns (both healthy and unhealthy) are recycled from generation to generation, even though the initial problem (such as drinking or raging or self-pity) may have been resolved. Dysfunctional coping mechanisms become habits that continue to manifest themselves.

A classic example of this is the way family members adapt to the behavior of an alcoholic drinker. Those who are not drinking try to hold the system together by controlling the out-of-control person. Their adaptive behavior (controlling) provides a psychological payoff, with accompanying changes in brain chemistry, that is as addictive as an ingestive substance. Family members become dependent on the dependent person's dependence on them. This phenomenon is commonly called "codependence."

Codependent individuals exhibit such traits as chronic worrying, irritability, arbitrariness, and an uncontrollable urge to manage other people's lives. They tend to dominate the social systems of which they are a part, while failing to recognize their own unhealthy relationship habits. In the church setting they feel obligated to act as a moral compass for others. They expect their fellow members to think, believe, and behave as they do.

Human beings carry their emotional and social liabilities

(inherited and cultivated tendencies to evil) with them wherever they go. Our negative traits of character don't disappear when we cross the threshold of the church. The conflicts that arise among us can be hard to mediate because they are more than mere misunderstandings or simple personality conflicts. Many are the outgrowth of long-standing habits that are as deeply entrenched as an addiction. Gossiping, compulsive caregiving, judgmentalism, manipulation, and the need to control are classic examples of such underlying problems. While these may not seem to be clinically definable as addictions, they yield rather well to the tools and techniques used to treat addiction.

Manifestations of Behavior

Recently I was talking with a Christian attorney who had been asked to resolve a dispute in a nearby church. The church had formed several years before as a satellite to a larger congregation and had experienced phenomenal growth in spite of the fact that differences had arisen over a proposed television ministry.

The current crisis was about a questionable relationship between the minister of music and his female assistant. There was some indication of an inappropriate bond between them, which they both denied. The dispute had gotten so ugly that one member was threatening a lawsuit.

While investigating the situation, the attorney noticed that the factions had realigned exactly as they had in the dispute over the television ministry years before. Shortly after mediating this crisis, he received a call from another church experiencing a similar conflict. Over the course of two years he was retained by five churches facing lawsuits over unresolved internal problems.

Many a congregation is decimated or destroyed by intractable conflicts that can be traced to the faulty coping mechanisms of individual members that were learned early in life and are literally hardwired into their brains.

Why the Controversy?

These struggles occur in churches of every denomination. Why? Because people don't leave their entrenched behavioral patterns at home when they go to church. The ensuing problems are rarely based upon theological or logistical differences. They arise from long-standing, deep-seated habits of thinking, believing, and behaving—the emotional baggage all of us carry from the past. Such psychological artifacts poison our current relationships. Even when we succeed in settling the "debate du jour," the underlying problem is still lurking in the background.

Common Symptoms

Common manifestations of dysfunctional relationship habits that show up at church are (1) arrogance—thinking there's only one right way to do things, and you're the only one who knows it; (2) grandiosity—a sense of self-importance that leads to the misuse of power; (3) extreme dependence on people and approval; (4) compulsive caretaking and control; and (5)

Resources

Journey to Wholeness:



A series that can be used in support groups or small groups as a resource to facilitate recovery

of breaking away from harmful practices and strengthening an intimate relationship with God in the Journey to an abundant life. Facilitator guides and participant guides can be purchased in our online store at www.AdventistRecovery.org

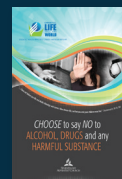
Journey to Life Newsletter:



This bi-monthly newsletter is available in English, Spanish, and soon in French as well. Print a free

pdf copy, download, or register to subscribe and receive it via email at www.AdventistRecovery.org

Choose Full Life Resources:



These are posters, calendars/bookmarks, booklets that can be used to share with others 10

Ways to Choose a

Full Life embarking on a Journey to Recovery. For more information and to place an order please go to www.NADHealthMinistry.org and check out the online store. The Choose Full Life theme song is also available for download.

Unhooked:



This is a 28 part series produced by ARMin and Hope Channel,

highlighting different type of addictive behaviors, real stories, and experts comments on effective treatment. The ultimate goal is to bring hope for recovery in Christ. You can watch the series weekly Hope Channel or direct TV channel 368. The complete DVD with all episodes will be available for purchase in October. For previous episodes and more information go to: www.hopetv.org/unhooked or www.adventistrecovery.org

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Other sources of support both inside and outside the church are available as well, and each of these groups has a Web site that provides information about local meetings (see sidebar). Resources within the church include Adventist Recovery Ministries (ARMin), which offers material for people struggling with the effects of addiction and family dysfunction. Among other projects, ARMin has developed a set of booklets called "Journey to Wholeness" that make the 12 steps more accessible to church members. These are available on their Web site (see sidebar).

Capable of Healthy Caring

Perhaps we Adventists have been so busy identifying and attempting to disarm the anti-Christ, that we've overlooked the obvious: we behave like the anti-Christ when we treat one another badly. Few people are more well-meaning than Seventh-day Adventists, yet we're sometimes incapable of caring for ourselves and others effectively because of painful personal histories.

Ellen White said that the Savior gave His precious life in order to establish a church "capable of caring for sorrowful, tempted souls" (The Desire of Ages, p. 640). In order to rise above our individual limitations and fulfill this mandate, we must each consider the role we play in the local church and the habitual nature of our learned, self-defeating behaviors.

If you, your family, or your church is experiencing the kinds of conflicts described herein, take advantage of the help that is readily available. With God's guidance and the support of others who have struggled with similar problems, you can find freedom from old habit patterns and live at peace with your loved ones and fellow believers

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NEWS

COLUMBIA UNION - Pennsylvania

Our first group on April 10, 2016, through Havertown Church in Havertown PA. We were eager to plan after the Florida training, and 15 of us began the "Journey". Pray for continued blessings...Gregg and Faith Mattison.

Recovery Ministry Training at Health Summit

Plan now to attend the NAD Regional Health Summit at Camp Hope, British Columbia, Canada, September 28 - October 2, 2016. Numerous training programs are provided, including how to run a Recovery group in your area. Visit www.nadhealthsummit.com for more information.



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splitting—gossiping, criticizing, pitting people against one another. When good people carry symptoms of early family dysfunction into other social settings, those environments become toxic.

Program of Recovery

Recovery begins when we humbly engage in honest introspection. We may see that we are doing something that drives people out of our lives. We begin to recognize the part we play in the recurring conflicts at church. We notice our critical attitudes, our inflexibility, our self-righteousness. When one member acknowledges their faults and makes an attitude adjustment, others follow.

Using the same tools that alcoholics use to find freedom from drinking, we apply three disciplines to the healing process: (1) self-searching, (2) the leveling of pride, and (3) confession of shortcomings. Practiced as a way of life, these disciplines (broken down into 12 steps) relieve compulsive behavior, which, in turn, diminishes our relationship problems. The key is addressing our character deficits (unhealthy caregiving, control issues, inclination to gossip, etc.) and treating them as full-fledged addictions.

The 12-step program, pioneered by Alcoholics Anonymous in the 1930s, is a remedial program of character development and a scripturally sound approach to overcoming ill-gotten habits. The steps are a set of simple, strategic, sequential, spiritual principles that address underlying character deficits. People who employ them experience deep and lasting change.

A Golden Opportunity

Certain codependent behaviors seem virtuous. Caretaking is a prime example. Very few healthy adults appreciate being "parented" by a peer. Caretaking behavior may have been an effective survival skill in childhood, but it turns against us in adulthood. If we are confronted for "loving too much" or helping too much, we have an opportunity to examine ourselves. In the process we may discover hidden motives behind our actions and recognize that caretaking everyone around us is not always as unselfish as it appears to be.

Insight, in itself, will not arrest compulsive behavior. At this point we must acknowledge that we have a problem bigger than ourselves and summon all the resources we can muster from within ourselves. Recognizing that we need help from sources of wisdom and strength outside our own brains and bodies, we reach out for both divine and human help. Having surrendered our wills and our lives to God and sought the help of the viable human helpers He provides, we humbly admit the exact nature of our wrongs. Because we have had ample support in preparing for this step, we are able to admit our fallibility without self-pity or self-loathing. We embrace our humanity.

I have just described the first four steps. They are accomplished under the careful guidance of a sponsor (personal trainer), usually throughout a period of several months. The remaining eight steps are also accomplished over a period of several months. This is a process of transformation, one that most of us call "sanctification."

Mutual Support

The 12 steps are a gentle, gradual approach to social, emotional, and spiritual growth. The best way to see how they work is to attend local meetings, preferably for an extended period of time. No one does it better than Alcoholics Anonymous (AA). You can attend open meetings even if you're not an alcoholic. The secret to success is getting a sponsor and applying the steps with your sponsor's guidance. Self-examination is an individual responsibility, but it can't be accomplished in isolation. We need help from others, help that stoutly avoids the misuse of power. Sponsors provide guidance and encouragement, but they do not rescue, fix, or try to control.

Director's Message



King Solomon is renowned for his wisdom, power, wealth, and influence. He catapulted to fame shortly after gaining the throne of Israel. But many years later he laments "vanity of vanities, all is vanity" (Eccl 1:2). He proceeds to review his many accomplishments, only to conclude each description with "This is also vanity."

Continuing to read this book written by the king, you begin to recognize his mental anguish. He had come to the realization that all his accomplishments amount to nothing. He will soon pass from this life and leave everything to someone else. "And who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool?" (Eccl 2:19).

But even in the midst of his sense of futility, there is a glimmer of light. His mind turns to the power of God, leading him to exclaim "He hath made every thing beautiful in his time" and "whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever" (Eccl 3:11, 14). King Solomon recognized the limits of human power and contrasted it with the omnipotence of God.

How is it with us? Do we feel like all our efforts to overcome an addiction or sin is futile? Have we tried and failed, and tried and failed again? Solomon encourages us to not give up: "Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him" (Eccl 8:12).

There is hope. There is power available for our time of need. The wise king directs our thoughts to a God who never gives up on us. Who desires only good for us. And He wants our lives to be bound up with His.

Two are better than one, Because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, For he has no one to help him up...Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him. And a threefold cord is not quickly broken. Ecclesiastes 4:9, 10, 12, NKJV

David

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