

Journey To LIFE

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

ADVENTIST
recovery
MINISTRIES
NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION

12501 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600
www.adventistrecovery.org
Email: nadhm@nadadventist.org

THE NEWSLETTER OF ADVENTIST RECOVERY MINISTRIES, sponsored by NAD Health Ministries

MAY/JUNE 2017 • Volume 6, Number 3



Editorial Perspective An Explosive Climate

Violent and explosive storms are noteworthy and newsworthy. These storms with their powerful wind and water result in much loss of property and life.

I am reminded of Peter, a close friend and follower of Jesus Christ. As one of the twelve disciples, his explosive nature from time to time got him into trouble. On one occasion, when denying that he knew Christ, he used curse words to vehemently emphasize his intention to disavow any association he might be considered as having with Him. Those words and denial fulfilled Jesus' prediction that Peter would deny Him three times before the cock crowed twice. Later, after Christ's resurrection, one morning on the beach along the shore of Galilee, Jesus provides an opportunity for Peter to make amends.

In this issue of the *Journey to Life*, I mention my father who at times was explosive verbally and today might be described as both verbally and physically abusive. Many years later, I decide it is time to make amends.

I hope you will read Juliet Van Heerden's feature article, "*Hope for the Wounded: Advocating for Addiction Recovery Among Adventists*." In her article she shares her experience with recovery and the value and benefit recovery can be for other Seventh-day Adventists.

I trust you will be greatly blessed as you consider how recovery has and/or will help you and others find love, joy, and peace amidst the storms of this life.

Ray Nelson, MDiv, MSPH
adventistrecovery@gmail.com

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 8—

“Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.”

Biblical Comparison

“So if you are standing before the altar in the Temple, offering a sacrifice to God, and you suddenly remember that someone has something against you, leave your sacrifice there beside the altar. Go and be reconciled to that person.”

—Matthew 5:23-24 (NLT)

Steps to Christ
The Test of Discipleship

Upcoming Events

May
Mental Health Month
www.mentalhealthamerica.net/go/may

National Alcohol- and Other Drug-Related
Birth Defects Awareness Week
May 13-20, 2017
www.ncadd.org

World No Tobacco Day
May 31, 2017
www.who.int/tobacco/wntd/en



12 STEPS to Recovery STEP #8

Willingness to make amends sometimes takes many weeks, months, and even years. The following is an example from my life.

Memories from the distant past are usually forgotten. However, one memory of a disagreement with my father continued to impact my present thirty-five years after its occurrence. At the time what started as a disagreement, turned into an explosive fit of rage on my dad's part. I was twenty and my dad was in his fifties. He was considerably smaller and not as strong as I was at that time. My strength came from construction work to pay for college tuition and other related expenses.

The disagreement led to my father's beating me with his belt. By the grace of God and His unrecognized restraint on my anger at the time, I did not retaliate. However, I did tell my dad: “If you ever lay a hand on me again, I will kill you.” I later came to realize that what I said was as much out of fear of what could happen as it was out of anger.

Thirty-five years later when my dad was 88 and I was 55, the time had come to make amends. It was after spending a half month at The Bridge to Recovery in Bowling Green, Kentucky and a year and a half working through the 12 Steps of Recovery with a sponsor, I was more than willing to make amends for my un-Christlike behavior at the time of the explosive argument we had so many years previous.

At that time, my father and I were separated by 1,500 miles. I was willing to go to any lengths to make amends with him. So I decided that since we were both celebrating birthdays that October, it would be a good time to purchase plane tickets and join him for our birthdays and make amends at that time!

Ray N.

The Best News Ever!

To err is human. I apologize for the negative introduction, but this Latin proverb accurately describes our human condition. We can apply this truth in multiple ways, but for now I would like to focus on the consequences we face as human beings when we err and fail.

Like most of us I have accumulated my fair share of mistakes, errors and failures, over my short, almost 35 plus years of life. Many of my failures were really just mistakes and the

consequences didn't really amount to much. Other times my failures have had disastrous effects.

About seven years ago several of my failures collided with such force that I had, what some would classify as, a ‘quarter-life’ crisis. But after the collision things got worse for a time as I added more failure to the fire I had created.

One of my big failures during this time was falling into pornography. I understand that some people believe that viewing pornography is okay, but I believe it is a sin which causes various levels of separation (I'd be happy to talk about this another time)—hurting the sinner and others.

To sin is human—we are all sinners, but the problem is the consequences and damage that sin causes. I suffered with guilt, feelings of unworthiness, insecurities and a number of other consequences, not to mention the pain and problems I caused others.

BUT, here's the best news ever! “As people sinned more and more, God's wonderful grace became more abundant” (Romans 5:20, NLT). The best news ever is that God's grace is greater than your worst sin and it's even greater than the accumulation of all your worst sins put together—that's amazing grace! If you have never heard of grace, then you've been missing out and if you've heard about grace but never experienced it then you don't know true grace.

Let me briefly tell you about, grace, the best news ever! Grace is a gift. Grace is receiving what you don't deserve. Grace is acceptance. Grace is getting another chance. Grace is limitless. Grace is attractive. Grace restores. Grace transforms. Grace is a haven. Grace is selfless. Grace is indispensable. Grace is contagious.

How do I know this is grace? Because I have experienced it and continue to.

My epiphany came when I discovered Psalm 32:8 which says, “The Lord says, ‘I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you.’” (NLT). I felt hopeless and here God showed me that He would guide me even though I was a sinner and a failure. Yes, I had to open my heart to God and ask forgiveness, but I didn't have to earn His forgiveness, help or power. I believed it and began to experience authentic grace.

If I was to summarize grace in one sentence I would say, grace is a safe growth environment. To sin is human, to discover God's grace is amazing! Will you try it?

If you would like to discuss this more, please visit me at www.yourfaithlink.net.

Royce Odiyar



Hope for the Wounded: Advocating for Addiction Recovery Among Adventists

Hello, my name is Juliet.” I begin as I introduce myself in my 12-step Sabbath School class. “I’m a grateful believer in the Lord, Jesus Christ. I struggle with work-a-holism and codependence that manifests itself in perfectionism and control. Food is far too often my drug of choice.”

If you were in my group, you would say, “Hi Juliet!” and I’d feel a tad less vulnerable and a little more courageous for having shared a raw truth about myself with a circle of people on a Sabbath morning.

It took years to reach this place, years of allowing God to gently peel away onion-skin-thin layers of shame. As a third generation Seventh-day Adventist, I am no stranger to church. I am, however, a stranger to “airing your dirty laundry” at church. I grew up in a church culture where people sat like well-dressed ducks in a row. We smiled, nodded, and said “Happy Sabbath!” with gusto. Even if on that particular Sabbath we were not happy, we’d never let anyone know.

For much of my twelve-year marriage to a chemically dependent spouse, Sabbaths held a concoction of relief, hope, and dread: relief if he was sitting on the pew next to me, hope that he was really “clean and sober,” and dread that someone might discover our family’s dirty little drug secret. Church often felt lonely, even though we were active participants. I naively believed we were the only couple dealing with the corrosive effects of drug addiction. Hindsight proves me wrong. We were simply one more unaddressed statistic in our church. Many more filled the pews. There was no

safe, healthy place to address our reality, and there were no relevant resources specific to our needs.

That was nearly a decade ago. Although cocaine eventually destroyed my marriage, God continues to redeem every dream I thought was lost. In 2007, I was humbled to the core when the happy Christian-family facade I’d carefully built utterly disintegrated. In the aftermath of divorce, I discovered my own need for recovery from the pain and the poor habits I had developed as coping mechanisms. When my spouse was no longer available to blame, I was forced to face the truth about me. What part did I play in the sick cycle of addiction that ruled our union? Why did I respond to every uncomfortable situation with fear-based control? How could I prevent myself from repeating my unhealthy patterns in new relationships?

In my quest for answers, I discovered a nondenominational Christ-centered recovery program in a church across town. I learned the biblical principles of recovery and began applying them to my situation. I accepted the truth that I am not my sin, nor am I the sin that has been done to me. It was there that I embraced the idea that my identity is in my Savior, Jesus Christ. I began living by His promise in Philippians 1:6 (NKJV): “...being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you [me] will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.”

Fast-forward several years. I am now the wife of a kind, Adventist pastor. My life is completely different, but I have not forgotten the pain of sitting in church week after week with a broken marriage and a wounded spirit. Sadly, as a pastor’s wife, I see

continued on page 4

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

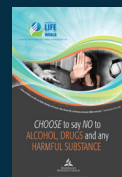
Journey to Life Newsletter:



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



Featured Article *continued from page 3*

and hear too many stories similar to mine from long ago. Addiction is destroying families from the inside out, whether it is an addiction to food, alcohol, illegal substances, or pornography.

Kiti Freier Randall, Ph.D., who has served as the director of Psychological Services, Department of Pediatrics, Loma Linda University Health, is a board member of the National Alliance for Drug Endangered Children. In a July 8, 2014 Adventist Review article entitled "Substance Abuse in the Family," Randall states, "We prefer to believe that substance abuse doesn't happen in our church families; however, as a psychologist (Kiti Randall) who has had the privilege of providing various behavioral health training for the Adventist Church in more than 40 countries, I can assure you substance abuse is a struggle for many Adventist families."

For me, it is not enough to simply be aware of, or compassionate towards, Christians wounded by addiction. I am compelled to make a difference in my local church and the Adventist church at large. My vision and passion is for every congregation to have Christ-centered, 12-Step recovery groups where men and women can find the hope, healing, and wholeness that comes from fulfilling the law of Christ by bearing one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2), consistently speaking the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15), and humbly confessing faults and praying for one another (James 5:16).

Shame, secrecy, and fear breed in isolation. Healing takes place within the context of a safe, healthy, supportive community. People struggling with addiction, and those who love them need hope. In The Ministry of Healing, p. 165, Ellen White spoke of this hope:

"Christ honored man with His confidence and thus placed him on his honor. Even those who had fallen the lowest He treated with respect... As we partake of His Spirit, we shall regard all men as brethren, with similar temptations and trials, often falling and struggling to rise again, battling with discouragements and difficulties, craving sympathy and help. Then we shall meet them in such a way as not to discourage or repel them, but to awaken hope in their hearts."

In response to the alarming rate of addiction among Adventists, recovery resources have become increasingly available from denominational sources.

Many resources may be found at Adventist Recovery Ministries, an official resource of the

North American Division. The Hope Channel and 3ABN offer recovery programs such as Unhooked and Celebrating Life in Recovery to provide insight and tools for dealing with addictions. Books, such as The Journey to Wholeness by Jackie Bishop and Shelley Curtis, and a recovery edition of Steps to Christ, are available through Adventist Book Centers.

I am excited about these resources. I am hopeful that our churches will embrace the opportunity to become relevant to those suffering the effects of addiction. Will you join me in following the footsteps of Christ and becoming a hope-giver in your congregation and community?

This article first appeared in the August 2016 issue of the Southwestern Union Record. It is reprinted with their permission and that of the author.

Editor's Note: Juliet Van Heerden is a writer and pastor's wife. Her blog – Sowing Hope in Hearts Wounded by Addiction is located at <https://julietvanheerden.com/>

NEWS

Do you have a story to share? Facing Addiction is a national non-profit organization that is asking you to share your story of recovery from addictions. You may do so at this link: <https://facingaddiction.submittable.com/submit/83661/people-facing-addiction>. Please note that this website is not affiliated with Adventist Recovery Ministries nor the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

According to research published in the journal *Pediatrics*, children who are frequent victims of bullying in the fifth grade are more likely to suffer from depressive symptoms in the seventh grade and are more likely to use alcohol, marijuana, and tobacco in the tenth grade(1). The work of recovery begins with our children and youth, and in our homes.

SEND US YOUR NEWS

Recovery related news, pictures (protect anonymity of individuals in meetings) and upcoming recovery and awareness events can be sent for future newsletters. Please send these to Ray Nelson, *Journey to Life* Editor – adventistrecovery@gmail.com and/or Angeline David, Adventist Recovery Ministries Director – health@nadadventist.org.

Footnote:

(1) VA Earnshaw et al, Peer Victimization, Depressive Symptoms, and Substance Use: A Longitudinal Analysis, *Pediatrics* originally published online May 8, 2017.

Director's Message



In a recent interview on Medscape.com, an online news resource for healthcare professionals, Dr. Roger Chou, Professor of Medicine at Oregon Health & Science University, shared his perspective on the opioid abuse currently experienced in the US (2). Used for pain management, these medications can lead to overdose, addiction, and death when misused. Dr. Chou shares that meeting the patient's psychosocial needs should be primary, and opioids used as adjunctive treatment.

The term "psychosocial" has been used in many different contexts. In the realm of health and wellness, we are finding more and more evidence for a psychosocial component to an individual's ability to recover from and/or cope with an illness. In essence, this means that there are social factors (i.e., human relationships) that have an affect on our emotional, mental, and physical well-being.

This is not a new concept to recovery programs, where a social support system has proved key in helping each other stay free from our addictions. And as we do so, let us remember to "consider and give attentive, continuous care to watching over one another, studying how we may stir up (stimulate and incite) to love and helpful deeds and noble activities" (Hebrews 10:24, AMPC). Giving support is about more than just helping one another stay away from harmful habits – it must also include encouraging healthy behaviors instead.

(2) The Evolving Role of Opioids in Managing Chronic Pain - Medscape - May 01, 2017



Angeline B. David, DrPH, MHS, RDN
nadhm@nadadventist.org
Health Ministries / ARMin Director
North American Division