

Journey to

LIFE

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



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Editorial Perspective Carrying the Message

As another year begins, it is a privilege to share some of the blessings and tools of recovery through the Journey to Life newsletter. Some of the best tools for carrying the message concerning recovery from "harmful habits and addictive behaviors," are those which have proved useful in the lives of many who have experienced the acceptance and encouragement of others in the recovery community.

According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) in "The Road to Recovery 2013... Discussion Guide," the role for people in recovery is multi-faceted and unique. "The recovery community plays an instrumental role in other people's recovery journeys and has a unique opportunity to educate individuals with a mental health and/or substance use disorder about the different treatment approaches available, the effectiveness of treatment, available recovery support services, and how to sustain long-term recovery."

Carol Cannon, co-founder of The Bridge to Recovery, refers to the Twelve Step recovery process as a "remedial program of character development." Is it possible that God intends that the best tools of this program be you and me, who with Christ, as "the Power greater," can remove our character defects?

I am reminded of the following conditional promise concerning Christ's return. "When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own." Christ Object Lesson, page 69. The words that precede this hopeful statement quote Galatians 5:22, 23. The fruit of the Spirit in this text are "love, joy, longsuffering (patience), gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance (self-control). This is the fruit we and others need to be ready for the return of Christ.

Can we use the "tools" of recovery to develop Christ-like character in our lives and support others with the fruit of the Spirit? My vision for Adventist Recovery Ministries is that it will provide clear principles and practices to effectively fulfill this role.

One final word as I conclude this editorial. We are grateful and thankful for the work of David Sedlacek, who has faithfully worked with the North American Adventist Recovery Ministries Director, Katia Reinert, these past two years as editor of this Journey to Life newsletter. As I now accept the responsibilities as editor, your prayers and contributions on behalf of this publication will serve those who can benefit from this Christ-centered ministry. ■

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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 12 —

“Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others and practice these principles in all our affairs.”

Biblical Comparison

“If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.”

— 1 Peter 4:11. (NIV)

Upcoming Events

ARMin training – Health Summit, Orlando It is not too early to plan for next year’s NAD Health Summit where additional ARMin Training will be held. The dates for the training will be **February 1-2, 2104**. Register today if you want to reserve a seat.

ARMin Awareness Sabbath is planned for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in New Port Richey, Florida, **February 8, 2014**. Sarasota, Florida Church members, who plan to start Christ-centered recovery meetings in their church, will be in attendance. All are welcome.

Mental Health Sabbath (every church in NAD) The NAD has set aside **February 15, 2014** as a Mental Health Awareness Sabbath. Resources are available for download (sermons, power point presentations, videos and a special issue of Vibrant Life) at www.NADHealthMinistries.com. Click on calendar.

National Eating Disorders Awareness Week is on **February 23 – March 1**. For more information and resources go to www.nedawareness.org.

ARMin training – North Pacific Union, Oregon The NPUC is planning a union wide ARMin training for **October 3-5, 2014** in the Portland area. Please save the date to attend if you can’t be in Orlando. Details to come.



12 STEPS to Recovery STEP #12 Practice Makes Progress

Far from being the ‘end of the road’, the final step of the Twelve is a launch site. We have had a spiritual awakening! Being awake now brings us to desire to carry on the progress we have made and to share the tools we’re developing throughout our life’s journey. The words are words of celebration: “Having had a spiritual awakening, we’ve got work to do”. No longer are we nowhere in life, we are somewhere, and we are gaining ground. This awakening is not a case of ‘having arrived,’ it is a reminder that we have become equipped for ‘continuing on!’”

The second part of the Step is a reminder: “...we tried to carry this message,” and we tried to practice these principles in all our affairs.” Trial is both a practical and brave way of growth. Most of our very best scientific and medical discoveries were made through trial and error. And yet it takes courage to fall short initially, but be willing to take another go at the challenge. A 12-Step slogan reminds us that ‘a problem shared is a problem halved, and a joy shared is a joy doubled. Carrying and sharing the message with others, doubles our experience, our joy and our resolve to continue practicing these principles in all of our life’s affairs.

As we have in the past Steps, we are trying new approaches where old habits, addictions or solutions haven’t worked. We are sizing up our challenges, at home, at work, in all our affairs, and practicing the use of new tools, new ways of trying out reliance on God’s power rather than our own. The word practice also reminds us that in Step Twelve, and throughout our continued journey, we are seeking progress, not perfection ■

Jackie B

Testimony

I grew up in a Seventh-day Adventist Christian home. I enjoyed it and made on-going commitments to follow Jesus. At age 12 I was a baptized. At age

15 my relationship with Jesus moved from being intellectual to more personal. I read the gospels along with the book, *Desire of Ages*.

The next year I had a conviction to become a pastor. That led me to focus on being the best Christian I could be. However, I began to see a lot of faults in myself. At first, I thought I’ll just have to work harder to overcome them. The more I tried, the more frustrated and guilt ridden I became. Unresolved guilt led to shame. Shame led to emotional pain. Binging on food became a temporary pain reliever. That of course led to more guilt, shame, and the need for another pain reliever. I found myself in the cycle of addiction and afraid to talk to anyone about it out of fear of rejection. I almost gave up Christianity, for it wasn’t working for me. The struggle was severe for about 4 years.

I knew Jesus loved me and died for me. I knew He accepted me when I came to Him just as I was. But then I was supposed to grow. However, I kept falling over and over. I knew it wasn’t God’s fault. It had to be something wrong with me. I wondered how God could still accept me when I failed so often.

Out of my own need for inner peace, I decided to set aside my question and focused on the message that Jesus accepted me just as I was. I graduated from college and then seminary and began working as a pastor. When things went well, I felt good about myself. When things didn’t go well I would blame myself. I lived with a lot of insecurity.

Then in 1990 I attended a seminar at Andrews University that included Bible teaching on the everlasting gospel. I learned how God was able to love and accept me. I “discovered” 2 Corinthians 5:19: “God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them.” Understanding 2 Corinthians 5:14-21 gave me a whole new perspective of the everlasting gospel. The peace I experienced led to victory, joy, and love for others, as well as security in Christ. ■

Clinton Meharry



Addressing Addiction Myths (Part 2 of 3)

Myth #4: People who continue in addictions are hopeless

While quitting a habit is an important first step towards a lifetime of victory, occasional relapses do not mean absolute failure. Psychological stress from work or family problems, social cues, changes in living environment, or even encountering streets, objects, or smells associated with a broken habit can all trigger a setback. Addicts are most vulnerable to relapse the first few months after quitting. For some of the most gripping addictions, recovery is a process and the recovering addict must never give up. The more times a smoker tries to quit and fails, the greater the chance that on the next attempt to quit, they will succeed. As long as there's life, there's hope.

Myth #5: Relapse can happen without warning.

The road to relapse always starts in our minds. It's been estimated that humans think as many as 10,000 or more thoughts a day. When those thoughts are negative and self-defeating, they can really pile up. We are often our own worst critics. Listen to your thoughts. Correct those that are counterproductive immediately, before they have a chance to fester and gain momentum. Victory—

like relapse—also starts in the mind. By controlling your thoughts, you can take an important step towards a continued recovery.

Myth #6: It's too late for me to change harmful habits. The damage is done.

The truth is, it's never too late. The body is incredibly resilient, and while not all addiction-related damage is repairable, much healing can and will occur. When you quit a harmful habit such as smoking, the benefits from “kicking the habit” begin to accrue as soon as 20 minutes after the last cigarette, and continue to grow for years.

Individuals who quit harmful habits are in for a psychological treat as well. The inability to defeat long-term addictions tends to beat us down, frequently leading to anxiety, depression, a sense of powerlessness, or a lowered sense of self-worth. In contrast, beating a habit can have a very healing, encouraging effect on the human psyche.

Myth #7: The addict has to “want” help.

One challenge faced by many who are addicted is that in the beginning, they don't really want to change. They may gain immense enjoyment from the addictive behavior or substance, or even

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Resources

Journey to Wholeness:



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

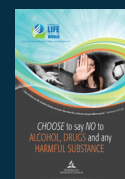
of breaking away from harmful practices and strengthening an intimate relationship with God in the Journey to an abundant life. Facilitator guides and participant guides can be purchased in our online store at www.AdventistRecovery.org

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

NEWS

LAKE UNION



Andrews University Counseling Class attend ARMin lecture

Graduate and seminary students in *Pastoral Counseling and Marriage and Family* classes at Andrews

University received lectures on addiction and recovery each semester of 2013. Ray Nelson, Lake Union ARMin coordinator, was a guest speaker in the fall of 2013 and presented a lecture entitled “Ministering to the Addicted.” It focused on the negative impact of obsessive thinking and compulsive, harmful behaviors in the home, church and larger community. Dr. North, one of the course professors, stated “Our students will benefit from these lectures now and in their future ministry.”

NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION

On January 14, 2014 the North American Division held its Ministries Convention. Over 500 attendees from the NAD territory were blessed by many seminars and workshops. Conference Presidents, Pastors, Union and Division administrators joined the Union and Conference Health Ministries directors who attended the *Adventists Recovery Ministries (ARMin)* workshop. “This is needed not only for the community, but for our members, pastors and leaders” said a Conference administrator. All concurred. Future Training sessions are being planned for California and Canada.



Attendees at the Ministries Convention in Monterey

Featured Article *continued from page 3*

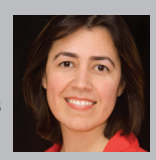
more likely, they are fearful of the extreme anxiety, pain, or boredom that will inevitably accompany any attempt at withdrawal.

The good news is, we don’t have to be entirely willing to get started. Studies from many successful “drug courts”, which force users to make a choice between treatment and going to jail, have yielded some encouraging results with regard to willingness: apparently, participants who were initially unwilling have just as high a ratio of success as their voluntary, self-motivated counterparts. So if your main and only motivation for trying to give up cigarettes is that your spouse gave you an ultimatum, take heart. You may find other encouraging motivations as you get into the process. Though it seems farfetched at the moment, the day may come when you even thank your sweetheart!

In the words of one counselor, “we don’t care so much about how you got here, as why you’re staying.” People may stop a bad habit for even wrong reasons, but in the end, the point is that they stopped. The brain fog starts to clear, thought processes begin to work more effectively, and though the initial motives may not have been totally noble, the end result is good. The key is to get started, and if motivation for even a small start is noticeably lacking, the constant prayer should then be “Lord, make me willing to be willing.” We can rest assured that such a prayer, when prayed sincerely, will be heard and answered. ■

By Neil Nedley M.D.

Director’s Message



A New Year: New Beginnings in the Journey

When a year ends it is natural to consider the blessings or challenges we faced. We may be tempted to minimize our responsibility for the poor choices we’ve made, maximize all the things we did wrong, feeling sorry for ourselves and discouraged. In either case, the result is damaging to our health.

God’s plan is for us to look forward to the New Year with a smile on our face, ready to write on the new blank pages He is making available for us. But an inventory must be taken if we are to continue growing and advancing on our journey.

To take an inventory we must be willing to set pride aside, humbly seeking God’s Spirit to accept the truth about ourselves. Pride stands in the way of us listening to what God is trying to communicate. This was true with King Saul. Pride was at the core of his demise. On the other hand, humility opens the door for God to work in us and through us. We see this in the life of Samuel or David. They were humble at heart and willing to set self aside in order to better represent God to world.

Often we don’t understand humility. Someone said “humility is not thinking less of yourself but thinking of yourself less.” Interesting. We are precious in God’s eyes. He left His throne in Heaven to die for us. He would have come just for you. You are the apple of His eye. Nothing can change that. But we need to learn to set pride aside and think of ourselves less, putting God first. God alone can teach us humility Christ exemplified in His life. He promised that if we would humble ourselves and pray, He would hear and heal us. Let us take our inventory once again and humbly seek Him in this New Year. He has wonderful blessings waiting along this journey? ■

Katia Reinert

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