

The NET-WORK

JANUARY-2012

Six Steps to Letting Go of the Past BY: Tom Q.

As this new year begins, I can't help but to think that I have "another" second chance. At the beginning of every New Year I make promises to myself about how I'm going to do things "right" this year and move forward on my path of recovery. The problem is I didn't know how to move forward because I was never taught how to let go of my past. Any addict will tell you that when we are left alone thinking about our "past" that we have a tendency to beat ourselves up. Our past is an enemy to us; it's a place we don't like to re-visit. Unfortunately, the key to our moving forward and to start our process of healing is sitting in our past. Below are a few steps that I found helpful for me, I promise that if you use these steps, in no particular order, that you will start to feel better.....

1. Let go of the baggage. Whether you realize it or not, as long as you hold on to your past, it acts like a heavy weight around your neck (think of Jacob Marley). We need to let it go! This doesn't need to be something you have to do all at one time. Do it at your own pace, you don't want to cause yourself more stress by trying to relieve yourself of stress from the past.

I know a lot of people that were able to let go of things just by crying. I'm pretty sure we have all heard the saying "I need a good cry", well believe it or not, IT WORKS!!

2. Close that chapter. When I was younger I loved the book "That was then and this is now" by S.E. Hinton. Little did I know that the title of the book would have a bigger impact on me than the book itself. You can use the idea of a "book" when you think about letting go. Rather than going back and re-reading the same chapter again and again, close that chapter in your life. Move on . . . read on to the next chapter, see what the future holds. You can't read two chapters at the same time. Close that chapter and let it go. Let it get dusty on your bookshelf.

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Special points of interest:

- First Annual "Reaching Out Through Recovery" jacket and blanket drive is taking place NOW..PLEASE DONATE.!!!
- We will be handing everything that was donated to the homeless on January 28th 2012, all are welcome to participate

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3. Quit talking about the past. Every time we talk about the problem or pain, we take what is in the past and bring it back into our present day!

Don't get me wrong, we do need to face our past and deal with any unresolved issues we may have. Remember, closing your eyes and wishing really hard doesn't make your past disappear. We should try to make amends to people we hurt and take responsibility for any wrong doing we have committed. After we have done these things we need to put them in the past, where they belong. If someone tries to bring up your past, just say "that was then, this is now."

4. Let go of the shame. We make mistakes. Sometimes we consciously or unconsciously do things that hurt ourselves or others. When we do this it's natural to feel shame. Instead of dwelling on the shame, think of what can be done to make things right.

Most of the things we have done unfortunately have been done before, by many people. What I mean is that, we are NOT alone when it comes to feeling the shame, and it's ok to feel that way. What needs to be remembered is it's unhealthy to dwell in it.

5. Enjoy today! We've all read about or listened to teachings about the power of gratitude and positive thinking! But few of us engage in the practice. If WE are to enjoy the day, than WE need to do it. No one else can enjoy it for you. You must enjoy for yourself. Enjoy it by looking at the positive things in your life, as small as they may seem right now.

On New Year's Day, try to remember and write down all the positive things that have happened to you in 2011.

6. Believe and understand the power of forgiveness. This is a big one! If you are holding onto a grudge and have animosity in your heart, GET RID OF IT! I have realized in my own life how important forgiveness is.. as hard as it seems to do at times. Remember that forgiving and trusting are two different things. Trust is earned. Forgiveness is a free gift, no strings attached. You can forgive a person and still not trust them and that's okay. Forgiveness is not accepting the person's action as right.

No one else can forgive for you. You are the one who must forgive those who have hurt you, done you wrong or caused you damage. I know it's hard. Letting go of the past takes work. If we want to move into a New Year with unlimited potential, we must let go of the past. Again, the choice is ours. Will we purpose to do it, or will we stay in the pothole of the past?

SO WHAT'S NEW?

The New Year has begun and now what? What do you plan on doing to better your situation this year? Do you graduate to the “Accountable Adult” status or do you continue to keep on walking into the wall of denial that you had built for yourself? Do you make up your mind and accept responsibility for your present situation(s) while taking the positive steps necessary to improve your life, or do you continue to live an “Addictive Lifestyle” for whatever your reason(s) may be? The time to get involved with the reconstruction of our lives is now. The time to stop blaming others for everything that is going wrong in our lives is now. We came into treatment to be freed from the grip of our addiction(s). Majority of individuals come into treatment willing to do whatever it takes to improve their lives and I’m sure that many of us said those same words, “whatever it takes”, while sitting through the in-take process. Many of us need to rekindle that particular frame of mind. We are aware that putting down the drugs won’t be enough. We know that other changes are necessary as well. Attitudes and behaviors are the two targeted areas of anyone who is willing to change in order to improve their lives. During our active addiction we picked-up many negative behaviors and attitudes that need to be addressed. The longer the addiction experience is the more engrained those negative attitudes and behaviors are in most people which only means there is a little more work we will have to put into changing. There are plenty of times that I felt like swinging on someone because “I didn’t like” the way that they looked at me or “I heard” that they were talking sh*# about me, but I am so determine to change the negative things about myself that I accepted that I must think about consequences first. When in our “active addiction” our thinking never seemed to yield to consequence at all until it was too late. The time that we are in treatment we have the opportunities to commit to real changes and therefore none of us should be wasting time on childish activities, **NONE OF US**. This is the perfect opportunity for us all to work on the issues that we have which brought harm to ourselves and those we love. This is the time for us to work on our attitudes and behaviors. Don’t waste the few hours that you are here in treatment on senseless conversations, pointless arguments, or “rehab romances”. Remember the thoughts that you had just before getting accepted into this program and get busy creating the new positive you in this rewarding recovery process.

By: Jose H. DeLeon

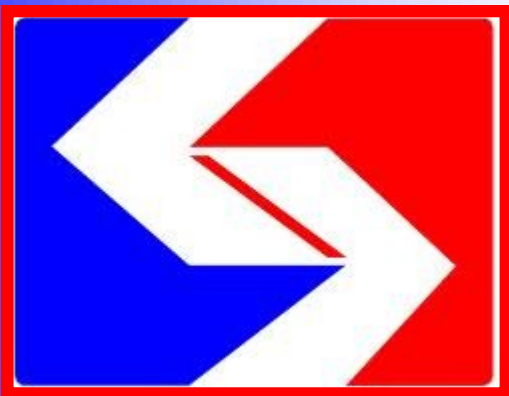
"If nothing changes, nothing changes"

LogistiCare

ALL MASS TRANSIT RECIPIENTS NEW BUS POLICY

- You are receiving SEPTA Transit Pass(s) in order to attend your clinic appointments. Effective December 1st, 2011 and thereafter you will be required to show your **CURRENT SEPTA Transit Pass** in order to receive your next month's transit pass.
- All Transit Pass serial numbers are recorded thus requiring you to show the same Transit Pass that you were issued the previous month
- Failure to show your current monthly Transit Pass may result in *termination* from the Philadelphia County Medical Assistance Transportation Program
- If you have any questions please feel free to contact the:

Mass Transit Department @ LogistiCare Solutions
1-877-835-7412 then press prompt #2



LogistiCare

FAMILY MATTERS

BY: **Suzanne Forman**

Statistics show that addicts are 50% more likely to succeed at recovery when their families are involved. Consider yourself really lucky if someone in your family still cares enough about you to talk to you about what you're going through. You know how many bridges you left burning behind your addiction. If someone you love shows you concern, accept it gratefully. If you don't have a family member, find someone you would like to be more like. Share your recovery experience. You'll be surprised how you can see your progress once you lay it on someone who is interested in you.

Many of you feel that you couldn't possibly turn to a family member after all you've done. Maybe your Mom has tossed you out, that doesn't mean she's stopped loving you. Maybe your Dad or siblings have thrown their hands up, but that doesn't mean they wouldn't gladly throw their hands out to you if you reached for them. But it won't work if you're using. You know that though, don't you? Your family knows too, don't they? Straying from your program is not an option. Don't attempt a reconciliation of any kind if you are not clear or serious about your recovery.

Having your family involved in your life again can only strengthen your resolve. As your brain gets better, you'll start to appreciate the closeness of someone who knows you better than any of your drug using buds. Whether it is staying in all the time, or visiting more often, you are showing your family that you are moving away from your old life. No one could love you more, even if it doesn't always seem like it. Prove yourself a little at a time. You will get the trust back, maybe later than sooner but it is so worth the effort. You are shooting for a full life in recovery and having people who are positive and love you around you will help you get there.



Burning Questions Answered:

What You Need to Know About Child Custody Laws in PA

By: Louie "The Lawman" Booker

When determining which parent is granted custody in the family courts of Pennsylvania, there are several factors that are taken into account. The courts prefer for the parents to come to a consensus on the custody affairs but if necessary, the court will decide. If you are looking to file for custody, then you should first be aware of what is expected.

Should you seek counseling?

Yes. When filing for custody, it is required for the parents to undergo counseling. The courts will take the opinion of the counselors into effect while determining who is granted custody of the child. There will be several factors discussed during the counseling session including:

The preference of the child

Past/present history of abuse

Which parent will encourage the child in a positive manner

If the parent has any criminal convictions

What about custody arrangements?

In the Pennsylvania family courts, the court will award both parents with either joint or sole custody.

Joint: A parent will be awarded joint custody if it is in the best interests of the child and if both parents request joint custody or if both parents have come to an agreement on joint custody.

Sole custody: The court will decide who obtains sole child custody based on what is in the best interests of the child.

How should custody agreements be handled?

If both of the parents agree on a custody arrangement, they should produce a written stipulation that explains their agreement. The stipulation has to have specific details such as where the child will stay on weekends, holidays and vacations.

What happens when a parent wants to relocate with the child?

If one parent is looking to relocate with the child, the court will hold a special hearing to figure out whether the parent is able to relocate. The following factors will be considered during such a hearing:

Reasons why the non-custodial parent wants to prevent the move

The relationship between the child and the relocating parent before the decision to move

If the move will benefit the child's life

There are several factors that are taken into account when a family is determining on custodial matters with their child and/or children. The family courts of Pennsylvania want to ensure that they receive the most in depth information before granted one or both parents with either joint or sole custody. You will be required to undergo counseling and to hopefully come to an agreement as to where you want the child to reside and with which parent. These factors can greatly determine the outcome of a child's life so if you are looking to file for custody, make sure that it is in the best interests of your child.

[If anyone is interested in having any legal questions or concerns answered like the questions in the above article, please submit them to the P.A.C. office for review and your question will be answered in next month's newsletter.](#)

Internet Addiction?

BY: Max Forman

Is there such thing? Apparently there is. To refresh all of our memories, addiction to anything is the compulsive need to satisfy an urge despite negative consequences. So in order for someone to be an internet addict, they must compulsively get "lost" in the internet to the point where they neglect many aspects of their own lives.

Who is most likely to be an internet addict? According to a joint Chinese and British study, there are behaviors that a person exhibits to increase the chances to becoming an internet addict. For example, the number one behavior that can lead an otherwise normal person to internet addiction would be internet gaming. Whether it is an internet casino or poker game, an extremely complex video game that connects players from the corners of the globe, or simple time killing games like "Angry Birds", internet games like these are the number one culprit to get people hooked. This recent Chinese/British study found that out of the many internet addicts surveyed, the largest percentage of addicts were compulsive internet gamers. The second behavior to get people internet addicted would be the diverse and ever expanding world of internet porn. Some of the addicts surveyed have lost their homes, their marriages, children, and financial stability to the disease of internet porn addiction.

The statistics of internet pornography are truly staggering. According to compiled numbers from respected news and research organizations like ABC, the CIA, and Nielsen/Net Ratings, every second \$3,075.64 is being spent on pornography. Every second 28,258 internet users are viewing pornography. In that same second 372 internet users are typing adult search terms into search engines. Every 39 minutes a new pornographic video is being created in the U.S. It's big business. The pornography industry has larger revenues than Microsoft, Google, Amazon, eBay, Yahoo, Apple and Netflix combined. In 2006, Worldwide Pornography Revenues ballooned to \$97.06 billion. Extreme pornography addicts can spend in excess of ten hours on the computer in one sitting.

The third behavior that is common among internet addicts would be the extreme social networkers. When I say extreme social networkers I mean that these people log an average six or more hours per day on sites like Facebook and Google plus. US psychologists have already coined an honorary diagnosis for unhealthy use of social networking sites which is called "Facebook Addiction Disorder" or "FAD". Just like internet games and internet porn, social networking can be taken to an unhealthy extreme. Most therapists consider social networking inappropriate when the person neglects daily activities like showering and eating because he or she is spending too much time on Facebook. 73% of teens are reported to be a member of at least one social network and is estimated that 10% of these teens are reported to spend at least 3 hours on a social network at any given time. Similar proportions are true for adult users.

I guess what I'm trying to say is that moderation is the key to enjoying things in life. If you decide to partake in anything pleasurable on the internet whether it's contacting long lost friends on Facebook, playing games online for quick entertainment or whatever your into, just make sure you don't go overboard like we addicts tend to do all the time. The internet is a wonderful tool to advance our lives, but just like anything else that's good, it can be taken to the extreme and can be harmful in some cases. Help for the internet addict is a new venue in itself, but there is help out there who need it. Be safe and healthy in all your pleasures by doing things in moderation. This is a critical rule to follow in order to have a healthy and balanced lifestyle in recovery.

Sobriety: Better Than Prozac!

By: *Rachael Brownell* / *Tom Q.*

Ask the average newcomer if they're happy and (assuming you don't get punched in the face) you can almost guarantee they'll list misery, struggle, and withdrawal as their primary problems. After a few years, though, most NA/AA regulars utter statements about how they never knew they could be so happy. This is tempered, of course, with vague references to health, marital, and financial challenges, but the seasoned NA/AA veteran understands these struggles as part of that larger practice of accepting "life on life's terms"—knowing that life is hard but not letting it keep you down for long. When I was new, I used to look around at the happy sober people and think I'd stumbled on a secret society of hugging hippies with horrible pasts. "We are not a gloomy group," says the Big Book, referring to the often wild and downright carefree nature of many meetings. Standing outside of one, listening to the echo of voices and laughter, it can sound like you're listening in on God's little waiting room at happy hour. So are addicts in recovery in fact happier than other people?

According to Christopher Murray, a New York-based psychotherapist, "folks in recovery have learned to manage their emotions without reaching for a substance in order to let loose. Perhaps the step work and the sharing and anxious phone calls at three in the morning have taught them how to access all their feelings with greater ease."

William Berry, a *Psychology Today* contributor and teacher, says recovery leads people down spiritual paths they might otherwise never have tried. "Although programs of personal growth, faith, putting priorities in order, and supportive peers are available to everyone... recovering people are given more of an opportunity for happiness," he says. In other words, we're willing to do all the hard work because our very lives depend upon it.

One researcher argues that a person in recovery can learn to reactivate the pleasure center by doing things like exercising and having sex.

Of course, there are no guarantees. NA/AA's foundation rests on the promises made in the Big Book, including the program linchpin that "God wants us to be happy, joyous, and free." Dr. Ingrid Mathieu, an L.A. based psychotherapist and the author of *Recovering Spirituality: Achieving Emotional Sobriety in Your Spiritual Practice*, points out that people often mistakenly believe this means they'll always feel good, when "what the promise of happy, joyous, and free really means is they'll feel good some of the time." She adds, "Anything that promises delight without acknowledging the down side is false." Meaning: if you're looking for the Big Happy all the time, you're chasing the wrong goal. You need to strike a balance between expectations of pure joy and finding satisfaction in random happiness and the struggle to improve.

Perhaps the reason many of us look so fervently for happiness in recovery is that we feel entitled: we've give up our drug of choice, damn it, so let's have some happiness and pleasure! This sense of entitlement is often strengthened by the fear that we'll never recapture the joy of earlier days. As it happens, this fear is borne out by neuroscientific research.

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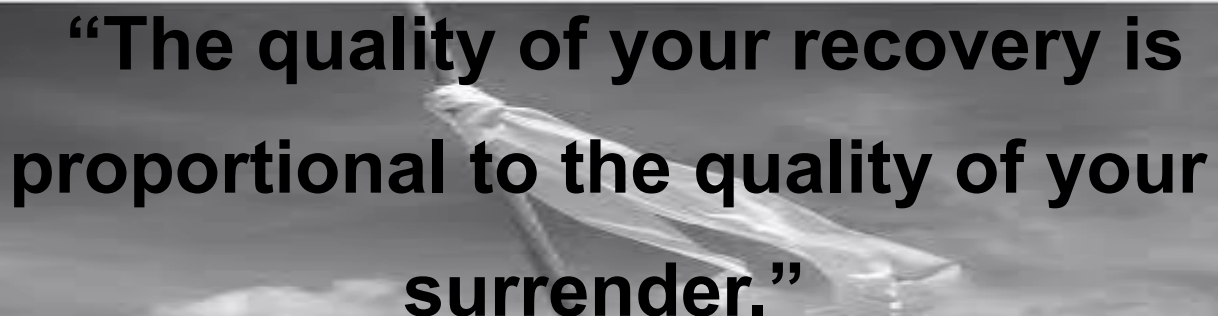
Sobriety: Better Than Prozac!

Some addicts and alcoholics actually have to work harder to achieve happiness and pleasure than non-users, according to Dr. David Linden, a neuroscientist at Johns Hopkins University and the author of *The Compass of Pleasure: How Our Brains Make Fatty Foods, Orgasm, Exercise, Marijuana, Generosity, Vodka, Learning, and Gambling Feel So Good*. In his research, Dr. Linden studied the impact of low dopamine receptivity (a shared neurological trait of addicts and alcoholics) on the ability of the brain to register pleasure. If you're a person with low dopamine receptivity, your brain is less able to register pleasure than those with normal levels of dopamine function. Such a person therefore has to "overindulge in order to get to the same set point of pleasure." In other words, for some of us, it takes more pleasure-associated activities (that is, more sex, food, and risk-taking) to feel the same amount of pleasure experienced by someone with normal brain dopamine function.

On the upside, Dr. Linden argues that a person in recovery can learn to reactivate the pleasure center by doing things like exercising and having sex (taking care, of course, not to substitute one addiction for another). Even discovering a new hobby or learning and studying something new can stimulate the pleasure center of the brain.

Perhaps it's the fusion of pleasure and happiness that has people in recovery wondering why everyone else seems to have it all figured out. Yet joy doesn't come without that often uncomfortable (and essential) process of letting go. Pain may be the standard of all spiritual growth, but no one likes it. Whether you believe those happy, peaceful looking old-timers when they say they are happy and that their lives are beautiful, is up to you. But it's clear from a biological as well as a spiritual view point that the make-up of NA/AA doesn't make many of us happy—or at least far happier than we were. Whether this comes from moments of pleasures linked together or some supreme sense of tranquility or the belief in a Higher Power.... our lives of happiness depend on us

It's clear that NA/AA is onto something. It's too bad you have to be an addict/alcoholic to go to NA/AA, It seems like such a nice way to live your life.



“The quality of your recovery is proportional to the quality of your surrender.”

NEW ADDITIONS

BY: Tom Q.

Anyone that has a young child in NET-Steps child care knows all too well what it's like to get "THE CALL" during group that your little bundle of joy needs to be changed because he/she had an accident. Immediately the thought of having to go over toward the dosing line just to use the only bathroom with a baby changing station isn't pleasant. You have to hope that there isn't a line of people needing to use this bathroom and that no one is getting picked for their UDS.

Well I'm happy to announce that those days are OVER.... NET-Steps has heard your requests and has recently installed **3** NEW changing stations. Two are installed downstairs in the IOP bathrooms. The 3rd one is installed upstairs in the OP bathroom. So now we have a total of **4** changing stations throughout the building...hopefully that will mean **NO MORE WAITING!!!!**

Thank You NET-Steps...



Philadelphia Free Legal Aid

Below is a list of free legal aid programs in Philadelphia, PA that provide civil legal representation for clients who would otherwise be unable to afford legal counsel in the State.

Support Center for Child Advocates

1900 Cherry Street Philadelphia PA 19103

Phone: 215-925-1913

Fax: 215-925-4756

Cases: Child Custody, Domestic Violence, Termination of Parental Rights, Child Abuse

Senior Law Center

1005 Broad Street, Land Title Building 18th Floor Philadelphia PA 19107-2935

Phone: 215-238-6390 or 215-238-6361

Fax: 215-238-1159

Cases: Consumer, Child Custody, Domestic Violence, Elder Law, Housing, Individual Rights, Real Estate, Wills

Philadelphia VIP Volunteers for the Indigent Program (VIP)

42 South 15th Street 4th Floor Philadelphia PA 19102-2505

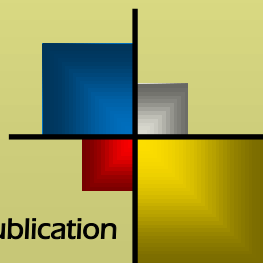
Phone: 215-523-9550

Fax: 215-564-0845

Cases: Adoption, Community Economic Development, Consumer, Child Custody, Dissolution of Marriage, Domestic Violence, Education, Housing, Immigration, Public Benefits, Real Estate, Torts, Wills

If you or someone you know needs help please contact....

NET-STEPS
2205 Bridge Street
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