

ROADS TO RECOVERY NEWSLETTER

Created by Dual Recovery at Warren Washington Association for Mental Health to support individuals in recovery

*A newsletter for you
and about you*

SPOTLIGHT TOPIC

Building Relationships

BY GINGER MILLER

Are you looking for the perfect relationship? Throughout the years I've looked at the different types of relationships I have had and often felt like I was missing out on something. I dreamed of having relationships like the ones like I saw on TV: Little House On The Prairie, The Waltons, The Brady Bunch, Eight Is Enough, The Cosby Show, Full House, etc. I wanted the perfect relationship whether it was with my parents, siblings, a sweetheart, other relatives or friends. I won't even go into all the love songs on the radio that could build unrealistic ideals. As a teenager I was often told how unrealistic media relationships were. But I still yearned for more than what I had.

Is the idea of perfect relationships truly unrealistic? Since being in recovery I believe I've found a healthier understanding about relationships. First of all, nothing is life is truly perfect and no person is perfect... but, ideal or almost perfect, I believe that can be real.

Most of the relationships I have today are relatively healthy and many are very ideal or almost perfect for me. How did I find them, or fix the ones I had previously? The short answer is with a lot of work, time, and patience but I can share some things that helped me along the way that others might find helpful.

1. I've come to recognize that healthy relationships aren't something we just bump into and find, they are built, which takes time. This involves both people being willing to have a commitment to the relationship and the willingness to accommodate each other's needs.
2. I've learned that boundaries are important. Think about what boundaries you have (not just what you like or don't want) and let others know what they are, an example might be with time: not wavering on meeting times, not taking phone calls after 10:00 at night, when the door is closed it means I need personal time, etc. Communicating these kinds of things before they happen can help prevent heated upsets down the road. Be prepared to hear the other persons boundaries as well. Respect each other's boundaries.
3. I remember that all relationships have disagreements and that is ok. The important piece is how you talk to and listen to each other. Rather than listening to respond (planning your next words or thoughts for example), listen to understand, truly try to see their perspective. And it is ok to agree to disagree. It is also important to learn how to express your emotions and vulnerabilities with this person, it's part of building trust and trust helps build the relationship. Yes, there is risk in that (especially if either person or both

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Building Relationships (Con't)

have trust issues) but start small and as the trust is built the bigger things usually come out a little easier. The relationship grows. Communication is essential. I had to realize the expectation that “if this person really loved me, they’d know...”, was not realistic. I was essentially expecting that person to read my mind. Nor was it fair to expect that of someone else.

4. I believe that a lot of life is about how we react to our experiences. The quote “Life is 10% what happens to you and 90% how you react to it” has a lot of truth in it. Knowing that we can only really control what we do, think, say, or feel and not what anyone else does can save a lot of time, stress, and arguments.

5. Learning healthy ways of expressing my feelings makes it easier to react to other people’s feelings in a healthy way. Remember that being angry with someone often comes from a place of feeling hurt and upset. Being able to recognize that allows the opportunity to communicate those feelings which in turn helps build the relationship. It can be helpful to look at other relationships to see what positive qualities are there and think of how you could bring those qualities into new relationships.

We may have many relationships in our lives, parents, siblings, extended family, co-workers or classmates, friends from a variety of walks in life, romantic partners, God or a higher power, and no doubt there are some I haven’t listed here. I’ve found that of all relationships one of the truly most important ones is the relationship we have with ourselves. If we don’t know ourselves then it will likely be very difficult to communicate our needs and desires or have the ability to express ourselves clearly and effectively in an emotionally balanced manner. As you talk with those you feel safest with, your significant other, your friends, or therapist for example, you can begin to get a better understanding of what you want for yourself. When the idea of building a relationship with myself was mentioned by a counselor many years ago, it sounded weird. I didn’t know what that really meant. It was awkward at first, but what an amazing difference it made as I worked on it. Knowing who you are, what you want/need, and why is a great place to start.

UNDERSTANDING THE DIAGNOSIS

Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD)

BY GINGER MILLER

Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) is a mental disorder, while the term “narcissism” is a trait that ranges in degree from person to person. Webster’s Dictionary defines narcissism as 1) excessive interest in or admiration of oneself and one’s physical appearance, 2) selfishness, involving a sense of entitlement, a lack of empathy, and a need for admiration, as characterizing a personality type, 3) self-centeredness arising from failure to distinguish the self from external objects, either in beginning in infancy or as a feature of mental disorder.

According to Psychology Today, the hallmarks of NPD are grandiosity, a lack of empathy for other people, and a need for admiration. These characteristics typically begin in early adulthood and must be consistently evident in multiple contexts, such as at work and in relationships.

There are two types of narcissism: grandiose (or overt) and vulnerable (or covert). Grandiose narcissism is marked by extroversion, self-confidence, attention seeking, and aggression. Vulnerable narcissism is characterized by introversion, high sensitivity, negative emotions, and a need for constant recognition and reassurance. A unifying theme of all forms of narcissistic personality disorder is self-enhancement, the belief that one’s thoughts and actions set them apart from others.



Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) (Con't)

People with NPD often try to associate with other people they believe are unique or gifted in some way, which can enhance their own self-esteem. They tend to seek excessive admiration and attention and have difficulty tolerating criticism or defeat.

Although NPD is a difficult disorder to treat, therapy can help those with the condition develop their sense of self and their relationships.

Individuals with NPD, according to the DSM-5, exhibit five or more of the following, which are present by early adulthood and across contexts:

- A grandiose sense of self-importance
- Belief that one is special and can only be understood by or associate with special people or institutions
- A need for excessive admiration
- A sense of entitlement (to special treatment)
- Exploitation of others
- A lack of empathy
- Envy of others or the belief that one is the object of envy
- Arrogant, haughty behavior, or attitudes



Individuals with NPD can be easily stung by criticism or defeat and may react with disdain or anger—but social withdrawal or the false appearance of humility may also follow according to the DSM-5. A sense of entitlement, disregard for other people, and other aspects of NPD can damage relationships. While a person with NPD may be a high-achiever, the personality disorder can also have a negative impact on performance (due to, for instance, one's sensitivity to criticism).

Researchers have reported associations between NPD and high rates of substance abuse, mood, and anxiety disorders. These may be attributable to characteristics such as impulsivity and the increased experience of shame in people with NPD. The presence of narcissistic traits in adolescence does not necessarily imply that a person will have NPD as an adult.

At what point does narcissism become a disorder? The term “narcissist” has become culturally entrenched, and the label is sometimes overused. The trait occurs on a spectrum, and it’s healthy for people to have a small dose of narcissism – it provides confidence to forge relationships, explore life, and take risks. Narcissism only becomes a disorder when it impairs a person’s daily life, through their relationships, sense of self, occupation, or legal standing.

Treatment for narcissistic personality disorder can be challenging because people with this condition have a great deal of grandiosity and defensiveness, which makes it difficult for them to acknowledge problems and vulnerabilities. Even though change is difficult, it’s not impossible. A key is to find a therapist who is trained to work with patients who have narcissistic personality disorder. Therapy can help people with narcissistic personality disorder learn to relate to themselves and others in a more compassionate way. By exploring their experience, developing the therapeutic relationship, and continually focusing patients on relationships, community, and connection, narcissists can develop a healthier sense of self, and with it, healthier relationships with others.

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/conditions/narcissistic-personality-disorder>

Riddle of the Month:
What has a bottom at the top?



Riddle Answer
Your legs!



IS THIS MEETING FOR YOU?

REFUGE RECOVERY

BY GINGER MILLER

Refuge Recovery is a practice, a process, a set of tools, a treatment, and a path to healing addiction and the suffering caused by addiction. The main inspiration and guiding philosophy for the Refuge Recovery program is the teachings of Siddhartha (Sid) Gautama, a man who lived in India twenty-five hundred years ago. Sid was a radical psychologist and a spiritual revolutionary. Through his own efforts and practices, he came to understand why human beings experience and cause so much suffering. He referred to the root cause of suffering as “uncontrollable thirst or repetitive craving.” This ‘thirst’ tends to arise in relations to pleasure, but it may also arise as a craving for unpleasant experiences to go away, or as an addiction to people, places, things, or experiences. This is the same thirst of the alcoholic, the same craving as the addict, and the same attachment as the codependent. Eventually, Sid came to understand and experience a way of living that ended all forms of suffering. He did this through a practice and process that includes meditation, wise actions, and compassion. After freeing himself from the suffering caused by craving, he spent the rest of his life teaching others how to live a life of well-being and freedom, a life free from suffering. Sid became known as the Buddha, and his teachings became known as Buddhism. The Refuge Recovery program has adapted the core teachings of the Buddha as a treatment of addiction.

There are two in-person meetings in the upstate NY area: Monday 6:30pm at Healing Springs, 125 High Rock Ave, Saratoga Springs and Wednesday 4pm at Hope & Healing, 4 Maple St, Hudson Falls. See the website for others or zoom meetings.

<https://www.refugerecovery.org/>

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Building A Relationship With Yourself

BY GINGER MILLER

There was a time that how I related to myself wasn't even something I thought about. The concept of having a relationship with yourself was an odd idea to me. What did that mean I wondered... I mean it isn't like I can walk away from myself, so I automatically had one I supposed. The better question was, “did I have a healthy relationship with myself?”

PsychCentral explains that when you are in a healthy relationship with yourself, you embrace your strengths and opportunities. You value who you are and what you've experienced. And you take good care of your physical, mental, and social health. Your relationship with yourself involves self-awareness, self-acceptance, and self-care, among others. It impacts mental health, connections, and even work productivity.

I've learned that there are innumerable benefits to investing in myself, learning self-love has been monumental in my recovery and for my well-being. I've noticed my relationship with others has improved and it's easier to find healthy people to connect with. I've noticed my mental health and how I manage it has improved and some of my recovery tools have become easier to use. I've also noticed that I'm better at problem solving when facing challenges in life now I am able to make better decisions for myself. My work has improved as well.

Maybe you are like I was and don't really think about the relationship you have with yourself, maybe relating to yourself is more of an afterthought, or maybe you'd like to improve and have a stronger relationship with yourself. Here are four strategies that PsychCentral suggest as a way of doing that.



Building A Relationship With Yourself (Con't)

1. **Try to build a healthy inner dialogue.** Your “inner dialogue” is how you talk with yourself in your head throughout the day. A healthy or positive inner dialogue builds self-confidence and helps you cope with anxiety and depression. An unhealthy inner dialogue may increase feelings of shame or fuel negative thinking.

To nurture a healthy inner dialogue, consider noticing how you talk with yourself throughout the day. Are you kind? Do you focus on things that go wrong or things that go right?

Next try to think about gratitude. Focusing on what goes well in your life may help you develop an overall gratitude practice. It’s natural for negative thoughts or worries to arise every now and then. It may be helpful to look for evidence that contradicts your negative thoughts.

2. **Consider identifying your strengths and opportunities.** Valuing your strengths may help you build self-confidence. Accepting that you also have growth opportunities may help you to be gentle and forgiving with yourself.

Try writing a list of your strengths. If this is challenging, consider asking supportive friends and family members what they see in you. A mentor, life coach, or mental health professional could also help you identify your unique characteristics and how to work on developing additional skills.

3. **Spending time alone may help.** Alone time may help you create space for self-assessment and inner work. You may want to focus on identifying your core beliefs, likes and dislikes, current challenges, or life goals. Time on your own may look different for everyone. Maybe you take an hour for a coffee break, take a long bath, or walk. Perhaps you decide to attend a sporting event without taking a friend. Maybe you put on your favorite podcast and do mindless cleaning at home.

4. **Try to take care of your needs.** Loving yourself is essential to have a healthy relationship with yourself and others. You may want to start by engaging in self-care. Self-care could be things like eating nutrient-dense foods, getting some physical activity, improving sleep hygiene, taking a course or finding a new job, spending time with loved ones, journaling, practicing relaxation techniques, or seeking professional support.

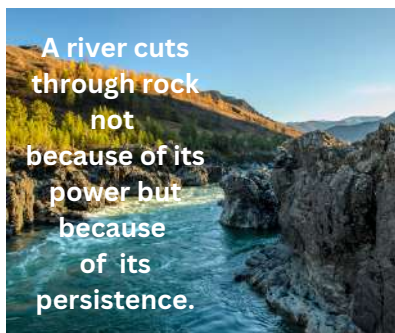
PsychCentral also encourages people to consider the help of a mental health professional if you have difficulty establishing a loving relationship with yourself or if you’ve experienced adverse circumstances that may need healing. A therapist may also help you develop coping skills and identify ways to develop gratitude, self-awareness, and compassion for yourself.

INSPIRATION & MOTIVATION

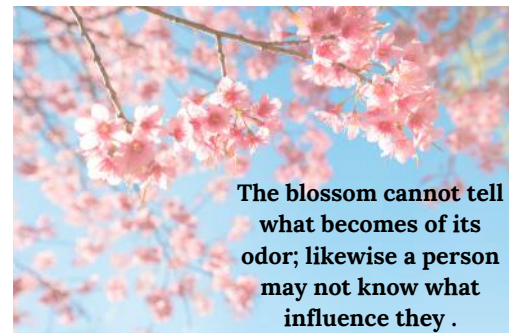
I hope there are days when your coffee tastes like magic, your playlist makes you dance, strangers make you smile, and the night sky touches your soul. I hope you fall in love with being alive again.



A river cuts through rock not because of its power but because of its persistence.



The blossom cannot tell what becomes of its odor; likewise a person may not know what influence they .



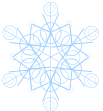


CREATIVE WRITING CORNER



Gratitude During The Holidays

I can be grateful for a lot of things during the holiday season. For one thing - the most obvious - is that I'm alive to see it. Of course, time takes its toll and friends and loved ones are lost, still enough of us are still alive and well enough to get together and celebrate. Old friends, good food, good conversation, and good egg nogg can make for a wonderful winter's evening. And if you add the newest generation coming along, its great fun to celebrate with grand-nephews and grand-nieces! The old and the new! Can you beat that?!



~ S.R.

Winter Season Thoughts

Some see the winter as harsh and lifeless but to me it's severe but definitely beautiful. The earth isn't dying, it's getting a period of a well-deserved rest and preparing for a glorious return to life in the spring! I look forward to winter. Of course, there's no way around it. Still, it is a cheerful (at least to me) time of year. I don't walk as much as I used to; I loved walking down the old Tow Path on a winter night and listen to the silence of the night. Enjoying a hot bowl of soup on a cold winter night still warms my heart!



~ Unknown



Winter Season Thoughts

In the winter when it snows, I get soda nearby. I stay home when it snows. I watch tv and Youtube. I cook and see Tomas, my friend, and talk to him on the porch. I say prayers when I can. I shovel a path when it snows too. I like to go back to drawing from a picture, like a face of a pretty girl which might take 3 or more hours. I'd like to meet someone, a girl who lives nearby who can visit me. And I'd cook dinner so she could eat over. And then I could go to her apartment to visit her. To have some to be friends with would be nice.

~ Anthony Gaghman

Winter Season Thoughts

I am looking forward to the winter season because I get to walk in snow. This helps my feet feel better as the soft white coldness of it soothes them and also it is a very busy time of year for me. I see the winter season as a beautiful time of year. Winter is full of wonder, joy, reflections of the past, good times, splendid decorations, and gift giving and receiving. In the winter I like to entertain myself with music, cookie making, shopping, watching tv, and playing with my kitties.

~Anonymous



Winter Season Thoughts

I enjoy seeing the city lit up around the Christmas holidays. It brings cheer to what might be just a cold and drab part of the year. When I was a small child (before the shopping malls were here), Glens Falls was the place for locals to do their Christmas shopping; and the city was lit up to the hilt! It was a cheerful time to be alive. Then came the malls and Glens Falls receded into the background. Eventually the old city came back to life and regained its seasonal beauty and cheer!

~ S.R.



We would love to hear from you too! If you'd like to share a poem you've written, some creative writing you've done or a piece of your recovery story we would love to add it to our newsletter to help support or inspire our readers. Not sure what to write about? I'll provide a prompt each month as an option.

February's prompt - What is one of the most important relationship you have? Examples might be a parent, best friend, pet, mentor, yourself, your higher power, etc. Why is it the most important? What makes that relationship so special?

Submit your writing please email it to gmler@wwamh.org, mail it to WWAMH, Dual Recovery Department, 230 Maple St., Glens Falls, NY 12801, or drop it off to me in the Peer Pod at the East Side Center at the address above.

RECOVERY

Resources

PHONE NUMBERS

Life Line Mental Health Crisis & Suicide Prevention: 24/7 support for people in emotional distress or suicidal crisis. **Call or Text 988** or visit 988lifeline.org

Mobile Crisis: Meet a clinician in an agreed-upon location. 518-741-6099

Crisis Text Line: 24/7 for any crisis. A live, trained Crisis Counselor receives the text and responds, all from our secure online platform. Text 'HOME' to 741741

United Way: 24/7 Connects you to a community resource specialist who can put you in touch with local organizations that provide critical services. English and **Spanish** Dial 211

Never Use Alone Crisis Prevention Center: A toll-free nationwide overdose prevention, detection, crisis response and reversal lifeline services for people who use drugs while alone. The all volunteer peer-run call center operators are available 24-hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. No stigma. No judgment. Just love! 800-484-3731

Rose House Warm Line: 24/7 A safe place to stay or someone to talk to. 518-502-1172

National Domestic Violence Hotline: confidential support 24/7/365 **English, Spanish and 200+ languages through interpretation service** 800-799-7233 or Text 'START' to 88788

National Sexual Assault Hotline RAINN (Rape, Abuse, Incest National Network): 24/7 1-800-656-HOPE (4673) or visit online.rainn.org.

The Trevor Project: 24/7 crisis support services for LGBTQ young people. Text, chat, or call anytime to reach a trained counselor: thetrevorproject.org/hotline: 866-488-7386 or Text 'START' to 678678

National Center for PTSD Helpline: 1-800-273-8255

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI): Hotline staff are prepared to answer any mental health questions you may have. (800) 950-NAMI (6264)

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA): Available 24/7, 365 days a year: (800) 662-HELP (4357). The professionals on the phone can provide treatment information and referrals in English and **Spanish**.

National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH): Available 8:30am to 5pm EST: (866) 615-6464 or (866) 415-8051 (TTY). Professionals can answer any mental health related questions in English or **Spanish**.

Boys Town: Specially trained counselors are available 24/7, 365 days a year to provide crisis support specifically for children and their families: (800) 448-3000

National Eating Disorders Association: 24/7 crisis support Text 'NEDA' to 741741

WEBSITES

Al-Anon and Ala-teen Groups: Hope and help for families and friends of alcoholics: al-anon.org

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA): Local group schedule and information: district13.aahmbny.org To speak to someone local call 518-463-0906

Debtors Anonymous: Debtors Anonymous offers hope for people whose use of unsecured debt causes problems and suffering in their lives and the lives of others: debtorsanonymous.org

Digital Recovery Support: Online recovery support groups are available daily. They are open to anyone who is dealing with substance use, mental health conditions, and any other quality of life concerns. Meetings are led by peer recovery support specialists who have firsthand experience and understand what you're going through: www.recoveryanswers.org

Gamblers Anonymous (GA): Online services for anyone struggling with a gambling addiction: gasteps.org

Grief Recovery After a Substance Passing (GRASP): For those who have lost someone to substance use or addiction: grasphelp.org

In The Rooms: A free online recovery tool that offers 130 weekly online meetings. We embrace multiple pathways including all 12 Step, Non-12 Step, Wellness and Mental Health modalities. Other resources available also such as news, blogs, guides, and more <https://www.intherooms.com/home/>

Narcotics Anonymous (NA): local group schedule and information: narcotics.com

Overeaters Anonymous (OA): Online support groups for anyone who wants to stop eating compulsively: oarecovery.com

PODCASTS

Mental Illness Happy Hour: Weekly interviews with comedians, artists, friends, and the occasional doctor.; exploring mental illness, trauma, addiction and negative thinking.

This Naked Mind: Some of the episodes discuss alcohol withdrawals, the link between drinking and binge eating, how to deal with loneliness, and more.

Recovery Rocks: Our varied paths show listeners that there are a myriad paths to recovery and countless songs to rock out to along the way.

Mental Health - Hope and Recovery: They share inspirational true stories and a host of recovery skills. You'll learn about treatment options, coping skills, goal setting, relationships, and mindfulness.

APPS

Addiction Apps: Twenty-Four Hours A Day (Free), Quit That! Habit Tracker (Free), NoMo (Free)

Anxiety Apps: MindShift (Free), Self-Help Anxiety Management – SAM (Free)

Bipolar Disorder Apps: IMoodJournal (\$), EMoods (Free)

Counseling Apps: TalkSpace (\$\$) BetterHelp (\$\$) Larkr (\$\$) ReGain (\$\$) TeenCounseling (\$\$)

Depression Apps: Talk Space Online Therapy (\$\$), Happify (Free), MoodTools (CBT; Free)

Eating Disorder Apps: Recovery Record (Free), Rise Up & Recovery (Free), LifeSum (Free)

General Mental Health Apps: What's Up (CBT; Free) Mood Kit (CBT; \$)

Mindfulness & Meditation Apps: Calm (\$), Serenity: Guided Meditation & Mindfulness (Free)

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder Apps: nOCD (Free), Worry Watch (\$), GG OCD (Free)

PTSD Apps: PTSD Coach (Free), Breathe2Relax (Free)

Recovery Support Meetings:

Schizophrenia Apps: UCSF Prime (Free), Schizophrenia Health Story Lines (Free)

Suicide Prevention Apps: MY3 (Free) notOK (Free)

Wellness: Wellness Recovery Action Plan (Goal Setting; Free)

THANKS FOR READING! :)

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SUBSCRIBE TO OUR NEWSLETTERS, PLEASE EMAIL US AT GMILLER@WWAMH.ORG OR CALL 518-401-5991



WWAMH DUAL RECOVERY SUPPORT GROUPS

EVERY MONDAY
2:00 - 3:00 PM EXPRESSIVE ARTS FOR RECOVERY
EAST SIDE CENTER
230 MAPLE ST, GLENS FALLS
IN PERSON

EVERY TUESDAY
4:00-5:00 PM OPEN DISCUSSION/RECOVERY TOPICS
HOPE & HEALING RECOVERY CENTER:
2 MAPLE STREET, HUDSON FALLS
IN PERSON OR
VIRTUALLY - ZOOM MEETING ID: 844-2214-0148

EVERY THURSDAY
3:30-4:30 PM OPEN DISCUSSION/RECOVERY TOPICS
OPEN DOOR MISSION
226 WARREN STREET, GLENS FALLS

EVERY FRIDAY
10:00 AM - 11:00 AM EMOTIONAL WELLNESS & RECOVERY
EAST SIDE CENTER
230 MAPLE ST, GLENS FALLS
IN PERSON

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