



COTTONWOOD
tucson

August 2011

Alumni News...

the journey continues

Regrets

Who wants to have regrets? No one I'm sure. The book of Alcoholics Anonymous states on page 83, that we will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. This is part of the ninth step promises. I have to admit there are still some actions and decisions I regret making in my past. However, I do not wish to shut the door on those regrettable actions because I'll never know when my experience will help another suffering addict/alcoholic. What I've noticed is, that no matter what a person does in certain situations, it's easy to have regrets. After my father died, I regretted not doing more for him. I administered his medicines, fed him his meals, did his errands, dressed his wounds, I took him to all his appointments. I was his sole helper and I felt honored to do it. We shared laughter and we shared tears. But when he died, it felt like I should have done more. That is where my support group and friends came into play. They gave me objectivity when I didn't have it. They told me the truth in a loving supportive manner. That experience showed me how easy it is to show up, do the right thing and still have regrets. Sometimes when faced with having to make a hard decision, I ask myself, "Will making this decision or not making this decision, lead to regret?" Today I try to live my life without remorse or self-condemnation. I strive for contentment and peace, helping others whenever I can. Regret only shows up when I don't.

Cottonwood is a unique, authentic, life changing, remarkable experience. If you want or need assistance, please let us help you. If you have any questions, please contact me at shicks@cottonwoodtucson.com or call 520-743-0411 extension 2517.

Keep coming back, Sally

Equine Assisted Counseling: A Portal to The Present, a Vehicle to Awareness by Laura Brinkerhoff

People are often curious about how Equine Assisted Therapy actually works. While on first impression it may even appear that there is some kind of magic happening, and although this is partially true, it is not really a mystery. It is the potential for complete present moment awareness, made possible by the strong and compassionate presence of a horse that allows for the powerful, peak experiences that can occur during a session.

Horses enable individuals to quiet their minds of future and/or past concerns. Racing, habitual thoughts and obsessing thinking diminishes, as the sensual, physical breathing presence of Horse actually awakens a person's capacity for intuition and instinctual wisdom. In this open present state, through the careful observations and guidance of the therapist, a person gains access to emotion and insight in ways that have been previously blocked, repressed or have seemed unattainable.

At other times, historical patterns of thinking and ingrained belief systems are triggered by the horse and made conscious to the client. However, unlike oftentimes in life, clients can be then guided towards a different reaction or behavior in the moment and a corrective outcome can be possible.

For example, a young mother is in the round pen with Divo, a petite Peruvian Paso horse. Her group of peers, the Equine Professional and I sit in chairs on the outside of the pen, supporting her encounter with her chosen horse. Divo is contentedly munching away on some left over hay. She watches him and talks to him softly. After an unsuccessful attempt to lure him towards her with hay in hand, she exclaims, "he is totally ignoring me" and begins to cry. When asked what is happening she describes familiar feelings of shame and a sense of being invisible. She begins to cry harder and talk about how her family "completely sucks her dry", and that she feels insignificant in her own home. At that point her anxiety and shame were so acute she requested to leave the round pen. I suggested that, although that was certainly an option, would she be willing to stay in and work through this, to which she agreed.

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I asked her what she would like from Divo and she replied by saying, “I would like him to notice me.” I proposed that maybe she needed to communicate her desire to him in a way that he would understand, that perhaps he was merely mirroring her own belief that she was indeed, “invisible”.

She then collected a halter from the fence and as she approached the horse, he lifted his head and waited patiently as she slipped the halter over his nose and buckled it on the side of his face. She then quietly walked him over to the rail where they stood in silence, facing us, allowing the message in the moment to sink in. “What is his lesson for you today? ”, I asked. To which she replied, “I contribute to my own feelings of being invisible and while these feelings seem to paralyze me, I can work through them and ask for what I need.”

Quote of the Month

The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me, is more important than facts. It is more important than the past, the education, the money, than circumstances, than failure, than successes, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness or skill. It will make or break a company... a church... a home. The remarkable thing is we have a choice everyday regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change our past... we cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude. I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% of how I react to it. And so it is with you... we are in charge of our Attitudes.”

~ Charles R Swindoll



Tucson Alumni Meetings

ATTENTION Tucson Alumni!

We are having many exciting and helpful presentations this year; Here are the next three months of provoking and inspiring presentations put together just for you.

September 7, 2011 Pam Gold with “Playback Theatre,” actors playback life experiences with humor and fun.

October 5, 2011 Dr Brian Walker will present “Effective Anger Management: A Review of Skills and Strategies

As always we will be meeting every Wednesday at 6:00 pm until 7:30 pm on the Cottonwood campus to learn and share about how you can access and better develop those tools and strategies you received at Cottonwood. Recovery is an on-going process and we can't do it alone. I hope you will come share the unique experience that is the Cottonwood Alumni Meeting. Remember on the first Wednesday you can come at 5:00 pm to have dinner with us, and feel free to bring one guest.

Keep Coming Back!

Farmington/Durango Alumni Meetings

ATTENTION New Mexico Alumni!

I am looking forward to the September 26, 2011 Alumni meeting. The topic this month is, “**What Fears Are You Facing Today?**” We have a great group of alumni who are serious about supporting each other. The 2011 meetings will be held at the **First Baptist Church 511 W. Arrington, Farmington, NM. 87401**(west side of building). The meeting time is from **7:00pm until 8:30pm**. I hope to see you there, all are invited.

2011

Farmington Alumni Meeting Dates

Sept 26 • Nov 28

Phoenix Alumni Meetings

ATTENTION Phoenix Alumni!

I look forward to seeing and encouraging you as you continue your journey in recovery. We meet every first and third Tuesday night of each month at the **ABC Wellness office**, located at **7219 E. Shea Boulevard Scottsdale, AZ 85260**. The meeting time is from **7:00 pm until 8:30 pm**. The 2011 dates are listed below. Hope to see you there.

2011

Phoenix Alumni Meeting Dates

Aug 2 & 16 • Sept 6 & 20 • Oct 4 & 18 • Nov 1 & 15 • Dec 6 & 20

InnerPath Retreats

Cottonwood's InnerPath retreats are a unique, authentic experience that will help you and your family when you need it most. Is there something blocking you from experiencing the life you deserve to live? Are you tired of being sick and tired? Contact Cottonwood to make an appointment for a life-changing encounter with that part of you who needs help and is waiting for the right time to take action. Cottonwood is that place and now is the time.

We offer several 4 and 5 day programs for individuals, couples, and families who want to focus on codependency, relationships, communication, grief, loss, trauma, and anger. InnerPath is like a mini-Cottonwood experience where you can come back for a boost to your personal recovery plan. All of our retreats are held at the Cottonwood Nash House, meals and lodging included, and are limited to 8 people. Rokelle Lerner who is a therapist, author, and codependency expert, is our facilitator. Please contact **Jana Zeff** at 520-743-2141 or e-mail her at jzeff@cottonwoodtucson.com for more information about InnerPath.

Beginnings and Beyond

Facilitator: [Rokelle Lerner](#)

This five-day intensive retreat is tailored to meet the needs of those individuals who want to make healthy changes in their lives. Whether you are just beginning the journey of self-exploration or someone who has hit a 'road block' in your journey, this program is designed to motivate change and encourage self-growth. Beginnings and Beyond offers a series of non-threatening, safe, and proven experiential techniques as well as traditional group and cognitive behavior therapies. This retreat includes list work, a powerful tool for releasing 'stuck' feelings from the past.

8/1-5 • 9/19-23 • 10/17-21

Women's Retreat

Facilitator: [Rokelle Lerner](#)

This five-day retreat has been designed especially to meet the needs of women who are re-evaluating their relationships, their priorities, and their sense of self. This retreat examines the effects of trauma on women's lives and how it affects their physical, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing. The Women's Retreat moves beyond the mere awareness of problems and focuses on tools to support women in establishing healthy boundaries, examining relationship patterns and letting go of old images and memories that contaminate self esteem. In a beautiful desert retreat, women will learn to make peace with their own personal history and take the steps in order to move into a life of freedom and joy.

9/12-16 • 10/10-14

Developing Healthy Relationships

Facilitator: [Rokelle Lerner](#)

This four-day retreat focuses on learning what constitutes a healthy relationship and how to attain it. The retreat is appropriate for individuals, couples, a parent and child (18 years or older), siblings, friends, or any type of relationship that isn't working or could use improvement. Topics include communication styles, boundary conflicts, how childhood issues surface in relationships, recreating passion, and staying connected without being consumed by another.

12/1-4

Developing Healthy Families

Facilitator: [Cottonwood Staff](#)

Addictions and psychiatric disorders can create chaos in a family. Stress and tension rise, frustration builds and communication turns to anger. Families do not know what to do. This workshop can bring relief to a family in crisis. Our five-day program offers education, new ways of relating, developing a healthy lifestyle and individual strategies to work towards solution and recovery.

Contact us to schedule