



COTTONWOOD
tucson

January 2011

Alumni News...

the journey continues

Recovery is a Process

Recently, a young woman asked me when she would get better? She felt defeated because one of her character defects, issues, behaviors, whatever we name them, was once again coming out of hiding to wreak havoc in her life. "I thought I was over that," she moaned. "What's wrong with me?" "Keep coming back, it gets better," is what I heard when I first started recovery. What gets better? Life? Circumstances? Other people? What is the magical "it" that gets better? What we slowly discover is that the "it they refer to, is ourselves. We get better. Just stopping our addictions has many positive changes in our immediate lives. As we persevere as we keep coming back, circumstances do get better but not just because we sit in meetings and talk our way to sobriety.

It sounds so cliché, but recovery is a process. Life is a process. Everything we do is a continual processing of small amounts of information. It takes a long time to furnish, decorate, and live in that deep dark hole of addiction and depression. Saying a few prayers, doing a few steps, going to lots of meetings, all those things help but time is the factor that ensures our recovery from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body. We have to practice being honest, practice being humble, practice being disciplined. Edison failed 10,000 times before he made the electric light. He didn't let his mistakes get in the way of his goals. When we keep coming back, when we try to do the right thing, when recovery becomes the most important thing we do for ourselves, then slowly those neuro-pathways start to change and recovery happens.

Nelson Mandela said once, "The greatest glory in living lies not in never failing, but in rising every time we fall."

"What's wrong with me?" she asks. I give her the same ole standard line they gave me. I never get tired of it. For me, nothing says it better. "Nothings wrong with you," I tell her. "Keep coming back it gets better."

If you have any questions, please contact me at shicks@cottonwoodtucson.com or call 520-743-0411 extension 2517.

Be well, Sally

The Power of Compassion by Maggie Morton

It's no secret that living with the legacy of painful events—fear, guardedness, loss of hope, loss of self trust—is extraordinarily trying. But it's sometimes surprising to realize that, for a while at least, living with forgiveness and compassion for yourself can also tax you deeply.

Many of you may remember that, when starting to process traumatic legacies, one starting point is to **require compassion** for yourself. That may sound simple, or just a "feel good" tactic, but I often see it as one of the hardest things we ask of ourselves. For some, the idea of letting go of self blame means sitting with profound fear—fear of living with risk, fear of living without clarity, fear of being powerless. But here's the great irony—it's the most powerful step you can take to reclaim your life, your sense of choice, your sense of self.

What might it take for you to confront the lessons of past pain? How many of us have carried the weight of others' daunting or excoriating statements to us? How often have we worried that perhaps our demons were deserved, were a fitting punishment? I think it takes all our courage to stand up to these memories, to these voices

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from the past, and challenge them as strongly as we can. (Do any of you remember the affirmation “not one more day...”? As in, “not one more day will I say the same awful things to me that they did?”)

I have a client who has learned (through childhood trauma) to blame herself whenever she feels pain. This has led, of course, to years of depression and anguish, and has become a self reinforcing process. To my delight, she recently said to me, “I’m through with this, this blaming myself for everything. I’ve had it. I’m not willing to do this anymore.” Now, *that* is a person who is choosing to confront the bullies in her past, rather than simply believe their messages. That’s a person who wants to find a kinder way to live in this world. And that’s a person who is doing trauma work-by confronting the lies of the past and reclaiming her sense of compassion.

But she’s not doing it by being meaner to herself, or telling herself she has to earn every kindness. She’s doing it by demanding that she confront the cruel voices that have whispered to her all her life, and replacing those messages with-you guessed it-Compassion. Forgiveness. Understanding. The willingness to reach out to the part of her that was so bruised and sitting with that pain differently.

She is starting to find that she can find advocacy, healing, kindness, and forgiveness, from herself! And that is the *opposite* of powerlessness.

Maggie is a therapist in private practice with 20 years experience in family, couples, individual and group therapy. Maggie has conducted trauma resolution groups at Cottonwood de Tucson for 11 years, and has worked in diverse setting such as private practice, inpatient rehab, and in-home family therapy.

Maggie has been trained in a systemic, strengths-based approach to therapy. Recent training has included developmental approaches to intimacy issues and trauma issues.

Maggie received her Masters in Social Work and is state licensed. She has presented workshops in the community and provided professional case consultation to mental health workers.

InnerPath Retreats

Beginnings & Beyond

1/24-1/28 • 2/14-2/18

Women’s Retreat

1/10-1/14 • 4/11-15

Developing Healthy Relationships

2/10-2/13

Developing Healthy Families

Monday - Friday
Contact us to schedule

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.

Cottonwood Tucson: Employee of the Month

And the winner is:

Andrea –She is awesome and goes over and above to assist me and others. She is very helpful. She is kind and helpful. My first weekend here she sat with me and talked me into staying.

Sweetwater Adolescent Program

Sweetwater is a 90-day residential program, internationally recognized for the treatment of co-occurring disorders with adolescent females ages 13-17. The *Sweetwater Program* has been designed to help girls and their families recover and make changes necessary to improve the quality of their lives. *Sweetwater* places a strong emphasis on scholastics, offering both structured classroom hours as well as a therapeutic curriculum designed to further the intellectual, emotional, and spiritual growth of each girl. Cottonwood de Tucson's *Sweetwater Program* is a recipient of the **Woodbury Reports, Inc. "Excellence in Education Award"** having been selected on the basis of our excellent reputation for producing positive and consistent results with at-risk young girls and their families. Additionally, Cottonwood Tucson is a proud member of [National Association of Therapeutic Schools and Programs \(NATSAP\)](#). If you and your family are struggling with addiction or depression, please contact us, Cottonwood Tucson (see below) and let us help you and your family experience recovery and health.

Phoenix Alumni Meetings

Dear 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 the month at the **ABC Wellness office**, located at **7219 E. Shea Boulevard Scottsdale, AZ 85260**. The meeting time is from **7:00pm until 8:30pm**. The 2011 dates are listed below. Hope to see you there.

2011

Phoenix Alumni Meeting Dates

Jan 4 & 18 • Feb 1 & 15 • Mar 1 & 15 • April 5 & 19 • May 3 & 17 • June 7 & 21

July 5 & 19 • Aug 2 & 16 • Sept 6 & 20 • Oct 4 & 18 • Nov 1 & 15 • Dec 6 & 20

Farmington/Durango Alumni Meetings

Dear New Mexico alumni,

I am looking forward to the January 2011 Alumni meeting. 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

Jan 31 • March 28 • May 23 • July 25 • Sept 26 • Nov 28

Tucson Alumni Meetings

Dear Tucson Alumni,

Just a reminder, that your Cottonwood Tucson alumni meeting meets every Wednesday from **6pm until 7:30pm at the Cottonwood Campus**. On the first Wednesday of the month you can come early (5pm) and have dinner (\$5 per person). You may also bring one guest. This is a great opportunity to show your sponsor or a family member a small piece of the recovery process here at Cottonwood. We have a presentation on the first Wednesday of every month. The Cottonwood staff will present different topics to help with your journey towards wellness. Every third month we feature an alumni speaker and we have a short meeting afterward.

Please come and support your alumni meeting. The bond Cottonwood alumni have is unique. I'm hoping you will always remember that together we can do what we could never do alone.

Keep Coming Back!