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National Websites:

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)
www.aa.org or
www.alcoholicsanonymous.org

Narcotics Anonymous (NA)
www.na.org

Cocaine Anonymous (CA)
www.ca.org

For Family & Friends:
Al-Anon & Alateen:
www.OregonAl-Anon.org

Adult Children of
Alcoholics (ACA)
www.adultchildren.org

Serenity Lane...
1-800-543-9905
www.serenitylane.org



Stepping Together

Serenity Lane's Alumni Newsletter

Fall/Winter 2012

Saving lives and helping put families back together since 1973

Create traditions on purpose.

We live in a busy, go-go-go information age. All the conveniences and distractions of modern living result in very hectic lifestyles. We don't have time for relationships. Family bonds are weakening. Extended families are often separated by great distances. Communication is difficult, at best.

Maintaining and creating meaningful family traditions counter-acts this current trend. Traditions allow families to spend time together having fun, promote a feeling of closeness, and strengthen the family unit.

Ironically enough, family traditions are founded regardless of whether or not you try. If a family does not purposely establish a family culture full of positive and meaningful rituals and routines, the plain lack thereof becomes that family's tradition. Happy families stay together by intentionally spending meaningful time together.

Family traditions counter alienation and confusion. They help us define who we are; they provide something steady, reliable and safe in a confusing world.

- Susan Lieberman

The "traditional" family is now only one of a variety of family structures that includes single parent families, two career families, biracial families, blended families with part-time and full-time stepchildren, homosexual couples, grandparents as parents, and households with parents of different religions or cultures. While family composition has been redefined, the basic needs of human beings within a family, to love and be loved, to cherish others and to feel cherished in return have not changed.

In today's ever changing society, a dependable family environment can provide a safe haven of security and emotional closeness for children and adults alike; a place where family members are able to develop their own identity and learn how to establish and maintain permanent caring relationships.

Parents recognize the value of a strong family unit. However, it becomes difficult to sustain a feeling of closeness when parents work long hours and children are involved in many activities outside the home. In addition, television often replaces meaningful conversation and results in family members losing touch with one another.

Establishing family rituals and traditions is one effective way to strengthen family ties while meeting the diverse physical, social, mental, and spiritual needs of its members.

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Newsletter Team:

Shely Rahimi: Editor

Angie Delaplain: Graphic Designer

Mary Daniels: Director

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR & ALUMNI COORDINATOR

“Change is inevitable... Growth is intentional.”

It is said that it is more common to hear complaints than compliments. This is not due to an absence of support. However, direct feedback is often inspired by negative emotions and experiences, and the positive responses remain concealed. So, for every disparaging interaction we encounter, there is often much more praise that goes unspoken. This unfortunate tendency may give us the false impression that we are not valued.

This dynamic applies in the workplace, as well as in our personal relationships, but we have the ability to set a new tone in our communication. If anyone has ever surprised you with a heartfelt compliment, you know the impact such a simple gesture can have. It can completely transform your day. In the grind of everyday life, there are numerous opportunities to show people that they are appreciated and respected, from the cashier at the grocery store to your closest loved ones.

Practicing gratitude begins with an internal process, but the next step to acknowledging the gifts in your life is to verbalize them. Although it can be difficult to convey your emotions to others, it is important to tell people how much they mean to you. During this holiday season, I encourage you to express gratitude for someone in your life: a friend, a family member or even an acquaintance. You will undoubtedly receive their kindness in return, strengthening your connections and increasing your level of happiness. But this is not just advice for one day. You can make every day Thanksgiving.

We are surrounded by more love than we even realize. Take all the warmth and admiration that you feel, and give it a voice!
Happy Holidays!

Shely Rahimi, Alumni Coordinator





Happenings

Outpatient & Alumni Activities....

Contact your nearest Serenity Lane facility for information about planned holiday happenings.

Eugene: Alumni Picnic Donations

Thank you to all of our prize donors for this years Alumni Picnic. Your generosity is much appreciated and our picnic was a great success!

- Uncommon Scents
- Pegasus Pizza
- Fiddler's Green
- Track Town Pizza
- Wildlife Safari
- Salishan
- Bijou Arts Theatre
- The Science Factory
- Sweet Life Patisserie
- Mo's Restaurant - Florence
- Mo's Restaurant - Taft/Lincoln City
- Passion Flower
- Larry Bradley - Chocolate Decadence
- Lord Leebrick Theatre
- Mike Dyer - Duck Football Tickets

Address Changes/Deletions

Help us keep our mailing list current.
Send changes or deletions to:

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or email to: alumni@serenitylane.org
or call Shely at **503-244-4500 ext 8103**

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Traditions can become an important facet of everyday life, transforming ordinary events into more meaningful and satisfying interactions.

Converting ordinary routines into meaningful traditions can take little more time than is already spent on these activities. The first step in developing family traditions is to review a typical day, hour by hour and identify the different interactions that already take place. What occurs at mealtimes? What happens when individuals leave home or return home? What are the underlying roles and responsibilities of each family member?

Once we have a better understanding of our daily routine, change can be initiated by focusing in on one activity. By talking with our spouse or child we can identify changes that would make an activity feel more worthwhile. For example, some parents find their morning routine is more satisfying when they have some time together before the children wake up. Other families find that mealtime is more satisfying when the family prepares the meal together and the television is turned off while eating. Families who do not usually eat together can establish a tradition of sharing events that happened to the parents and children during the day.

For family members who do not live together throughout the week, developing weekend rituals can create a sense of belonging. Parents and children can look forward to planned activities, such as visiting friends or relatives or cooking a special breakfast together. Annual events, such as birthday and holiday celebrations, can be given special meaning by incorporating each person's ideas on how to make the occasion meaningful.

Families need to be nurtured in order to grow and develop. Without continuous attention, family relationships can become stagnant and may fail to provide each member with a desired level of satisfaction. Just as we water our plants, maintain our cars and take care of our pets, we need to work at maintaining strong, healthy family ties that will increase the happiness and well being of the entire family, now and in the future. Developing rituals and traditions out of ordinary, daily routines can help families transition together from one activity to another and provide a feeling of continuity and security to all family members throughout their lives.



Family Traditions that may work for you

Daily Traditions

- Eat dinner together
- Read books together before bed
- Keep a gratitude journal
- Say “I love you”

Weekly Traditions

- Take a Sunday afternoon walk
- Attend worship services together
- Watch a movie and eat pizza every Friday night
- Cook Saturday breakfast in your pajamas as a family
- Eat popcorn at Grandma & Grandpa’s house every Sunday evening
- Have a family game night
- Call home

Monthly Traditions

- Have a regular daddy-daughter date
- Eat dinner with your grandparents
- Hold regular family councils or meetings

Seasonal Traditions

- Pick apples and press your own cider each fall
- Interview the kids on video before the first day of school each year
- Swim at your favorite lake each summer
- Make and send birthday cards to your cousins

Vacation Together

- Plant flowers each spring
- Sleep on the trampoline under the stars in the summer
- Celebrate the first snow fall with hot chocolate

Holiday Traditions

- Eat a favorite meal on your birthday
- Dress up in costumes each Halloween
- Take pictures with mom & the kids every Mother’s day
- Make dad a t-shirt for Father’s day
- Drink green milk on St. Patrick’s Day
- Celebrate your wedding anniversary
- Celebrate the Chinese New Year
- Have a “Kid’s Day”
- Decorate birthday cakes
- Take flowers to an ancestor’s grave on Memorial Day

Family Christmas Traditions

- Search out and cut down your own Christmas tree
- Put a new ornament on the tree each year
- Go caroling
- Exchange white elephant gifts
- Act out the nativity on Christmas Eve
- Eat orange rolls for breakfast
- Host a neighborhood party
- Give everyone new pajamas

Family Reunion Traditions

- Create (or add to) a time capsule
- Exchange gifts with your cousins
- Participate in a talent show
- Have an adult-only game night
- Report on significant family news





Recovery During the Holidays

by Kay Sheppard, LMHC, CEDS

During the holiday season attendance falls off in recovery meetings and our recovering friends start to disappear. Some of these disappearances are long-term and some permanent. What happens during the holidays? Increased stress is certainly a complicating factor in holiday activities. There is more pressure, date books are fuller, “to do lists” become longer, and all together, these are busy times.

During these fast-paced times it is tempting to start canceling meetings, forgetting phone calls and postponing Step work until after the holidays. After all, isn’t this the reason that we recover, to enjoy life? The temptation is to take a holiday from recovery. We have to be vigilant about this kind of complacency and overconfidence. Whatever the excuse for letting up on recovery activities, the “24 hour principle” of recovery still applies. We must remember that we cannot stay abstinent on yesterday’s program. It is crucial to recovery to maintain our program and to maintain the 24/7 concept -- we work our programs 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. Each holiday is nothing more than another 24 hour time frame which requires our attention as recovering people.

What is your best recovery program?

Before the holidays become frantic, it would be a good idea to outline your “best recovery” program. Formulate a checklist based on those activities which best support your recovery. This checklist might include the optimum number of meetings to attend, a commitment to daily phone calls, reading, writing, prayer and meditation. It might look something like this:

Inventory Checklist

Phoned sponsor ____

Attended meeting ____

Exercised ____ hour(s)

Journal writing

Gratitude list

Meditation ____ times

Prayer

Reading Recovery literature (name specific materials)

One of the obvious pitfalls of the holiday season is the abundance of tempting food and high calorie beverages. Magazine covers display the foods or drink which can trigger our addiction and our life of horror in innocent and gorgeous splendor. The whole world has missed the idea that those foods and drinks should be photographed with a skull-and-crossbones “poison” label. For those of us who are predisposed to addiction, those holiday temptations can be particularly devastating. Of course, there are always those folks who are urging us to drink “just a little” of those festive cocktails, too.

The best way to maintain abstinence throughout the holiday is to eliminate and restrict the number of occasions attended, to show up prepared with our own non-alcoholic festive beverage.

The bottom line is that you are always responsible for your own recovery and are always responsible for what you choose to drink. And you have to understand that some party hostesses don’t understand the importance of physical abstinence.

Let us hope that all of us will be guided in recovery through the holidays, making them days of joy and peace. ■

“I’m not telling you it is going to be easy, I’m telling you it’s going to be worth it.” ~Art Williams

Qigong for Sustainable Recovery

Part 2: The Practice of Qigong



People practice Qigong for many reasons in their process of recovery. For some it is a means of restoring, maintaining, and improving physical health; for others it is a path to relaxation and emotional balance; for still others it is a spiritual tool. It is common to experience initial results that deepen and evolve with continued practice. The road to recovery is challenging and rewarding. I hope you will find these ideas and tools helpful on your journey of change.

The following two exercises are effective tools for gaining awareness and regulating the breath and the flow of qi.

Sitting Deeply upon the earth

Preparation: Sit comfortably in a chair with your feet parallel and flat on the floor, your knees about two fist widths apart. Your back is erect but relaxed and your chin is slightly tucked to lengthen your spine.

With your palms facing up, place your right fingers on top of and parallel to your left fingers, touch the tips of your thumbs. In this position, let your hands rest comfortably in you lap and relax your shoulders.

Lightly place the tip of your tongue behind the top row of your teeth. Relax the root of your tongue, your mouth, and jaw. Take a moment to sit quietly and relax into the posture.

Five Abdominal Breaths

Slowly inhale through your nostrils allowing your abdomen, sides, and lower back to expand. Imagine a balloon inflating in your lower abdomen. Hold the breath for 4 counts and slowly exhale through your mouth. On the exhale, allow your abdomen, sides, and lower back to retract. Continue this slow, relaxed breathing for a total of five breaths. When you're finished, return to natural breathing.

Visualization: During the preparation, imagine that you are sending roots deep into the earth. On each exhale, let your body relax and sink more deeply into the chair.

Holding up the sky with two hands

Preparation: The same as above

Five Reverse-Abdominal Breaths. As you inhale through your nose, move your hands up the center line of your body to the level of your chest/shoulders. Turn your hands so your palms are facing up, finger tips facing those of the opposite hand, as you continue to move your hands up and straighten your arms over your head. The movements will naturally contract the abdomen on the inhale. Gently reach toward the sky with your palms facing up and hold the breath for 4 counts. Exhale through your mouth as you slowly open your arms to the sides, relax, and return to the original hand posture. Repeat the sequence five times. When you're finished, return to natural breathing.

Visualization: Imagine holding up the sky with both hands. As you lower your arms, visualize your body opening and expanding; imagine exhaling from every pore of your body.

Attention: Try to be attentive to the movement and breath work—letting the cares and concerns of the day recede for these few minutes. When your mind wanders, simply return your attention to your breathing.

You can practice these two techniques together or separately, anywhere and anytime. If it isn't convenient to sit down, do them standing up—at the kitchen counter, the Xerox machine, anywhere. You can use them when you feel a need to relax and reestablish a natural breathing pattern. Try them just before going to bed to help



• you sleep or in the morning to help you wake up. Don't worry about doing them "correctly," it will only add to your stress! Relax and find what works for you; enjoy the time you take for yourself. ■

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Volunteering During the Holidays...

Volunteering is a great way to build community and help out your favorite nonprofits.

Because so many people want to volunteer during this time of year, a lot of nonprofits have trouble accommodating everyone who wants to give their time. This can be frustrating to both the nonprofit that is being inundated with volunteer requests but doesn't have the availability to accommodate them, and the volunteers who really want to help out but can't find an opportunity. Here are some tips to make volunteering during the holidays easier.

Start Early - Just like doing all of your holiday shopping before the rush of Black Friday makes your holiday gift giving a little bit easier, so will starting a relationship with the nonprofit you want to volunteer at during the holidays in September or October. Whether it's to start volunteering, or to sign up for events during the holiday season, starting a relationship with a nonprofit before the holiday rush will make it easier to volunteer during the holidays.

Be Realistic About the Time You Can Commit - Let's face it, no matter how well you plan things, something's going to happen to make your well planned holiday time line fall apart. Shopping is going to take too long, you're going to have to go to seven stores to find any kind of gift wrap, or decorating those cookies just got out of hand but you have a surprisingly accurate depiction of Van Gogh's Starry Night. So, when you sign up for that volunteer event, be sure to stick to the amount

of time you think you'll have available. Don't try to squeeze in an all day event if you only have a few hours.

Be Flexible - Your ideal type volunteer opportunity might not be available when you can volunteer. Use the opportunity to try something that you've never done before! It just might be your new favorite thing.

Donate - If you can't find an opportunity to volunteer that fits your schedule and what you want to do, consider taking the time you were going to volunteer and turn it into a donation. Ask the organization what they really need and try to fill that need. If your local homeless shelter needs toiletry kits, pick some items up the next time you're at the grocery and put some together for them. You're still supporting the organization and its clients, but you're able to do it at a time and in a way that's convenient for you.

Be the Gift That Keeps On Giving - The holidays aren't the only time that nonprofits need volunteers! Use your holiday volunteering as a springboard for a relationship with the nonprofit.

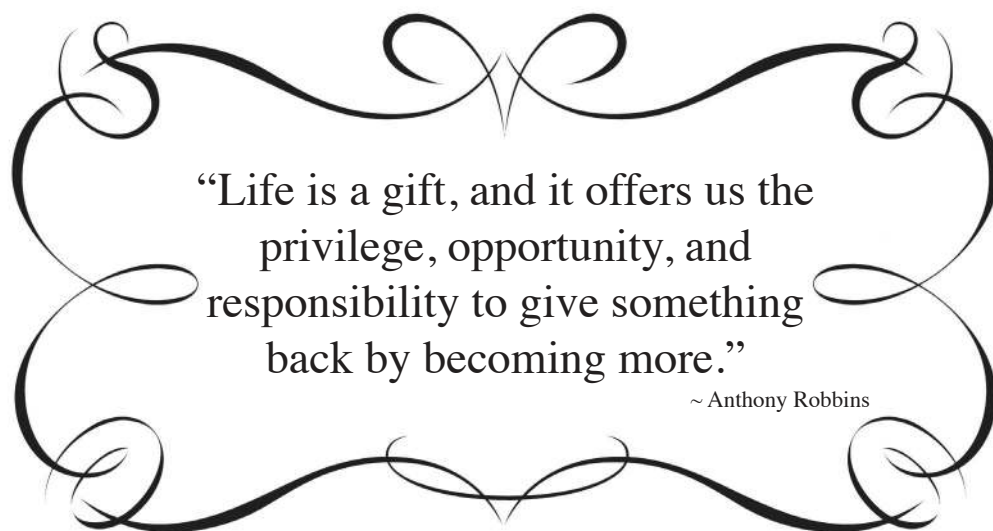
Include Your Family - Start a tradition of volunteerism at the holidays with your entire family, and carry it through the year.

Have Fun - This might be the most important part of your holiday volunteering. Have fun doing it!

If your family has a tradition of volunteering during the holidays we'd love to hear about it!

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- **Editor/Happenings**
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- **Qigong: Part 2**
- **Volunteering During the Holidays**



Check with local organizations about volunteering over the holidays and give thanks!



- Food Pantry
- Women's Clinic
- Pet Shelter
- St. Vincent De Paul
- Salvation Army
- Goodwill
- Cancer Society
- Children's Hospital
- Assisted Living Homes
- Relief Nursery
- Holiday Giving Tree
- Recycle Center

