



Pine Grove

Alumni Program

Forrest Health®

Summer Issue
2020



Staying Connected During a Pandemic

By: Kaci McCurdy, MS, MBA, LPC
Clinical Therapist, Pine Grove's Legacy Program

I think it is safe to say that these last several months have taken our society for a whirl spin. COVID – 19 has come in and caused change for all of us. I don't know about you all, but I had lots of fun summer plans, "Fun in the sun" that was canceled due to this pandemic, and let me tell you I was not a happy camper. You talk about emotional turmoil for something that was not only out of my control, but it was something I could not change. With that being said, I think it is safe to say that change is one of the hardest challenges for most individuals. Coping with change is difficult because it pushes us to a place of discomfort. Change can have a significant impact on one's emotional health, as can be seen in reported increased numbers of substance misuse and suicides since this pandemic started.

This pandemic has taken a toll on all of us because it has changed how we can interact and connect to the people around us. Not being able to communicate and connect can be harmful to our emotional health because, as humans, we are wired for connection. The lack of being able to interact and connect could be especially detrimental to those in recovery. We all know that one of the components for maintaining sobriety is getting out, socializing, and connecting. This pandemic could be the perfect storm for those in recovery to revert to old behaviors related to their addiction.

This pandemic can be the "The Perfect Excuse" for relapse due to public health guidelines for social distancing, social gatherings in limited numbers, and limited open spaces for meetings. The limitations offered do not have to result in individuals losing their ability to interact and connect to others. Still, it does change how one will have to communicate and connect to others, which could be challenging and stressful for those who are not technically sound. This change is a great way to continue practicing components needed while in recovery, asking for help, speaking to uncomfortable thoughts and emotions due to this pandemic, and continuing to implement self-care.

The pandemic does not stop these things unless you allow it to, but it does change how one will maintain these things and be in a healthy place in my sobriety. I get it, virtual communication isn't ideal for some people, especially if you are "Old fashioned" like myself, but it goes back to the question I ask my patients, "What are you willing to do for your recovery?" This change can be challenging, but there are still ways one can take care of themselves and their recovery during this time:

Connect with others when possible. Virtual communication has been adopted as the new norm. Meetings and gatherings are available for individuals to stay connected. One has to be willing to ask for help to gather the information to access these meetings.

Emotional health care. One has to make sure they are allowing themselves to speak to their uncomfortable thoughts and emotions regarding what has been happening in their life as a result of this pandemic. Keeping these things held in can result in them festering! Speak up.

Self-care. One has to make sure they are engaging in self-care (mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual). Self-care is enjoying the things that you enjoy. Even with COVID limitations, there are still ways to engage in self-care (ride a bike, read a book, learn a new craft, walk your dog, etc.).

News and Social Media Breaks. Don't get so caught up in all the news and social media. Allow yourself some time away from these things because it could keep one on edge.

So yeah, I get it, this is not our ideal norm, but at this point, it is one of our new standards. One has to be open to adapting to change and implementing what is available to cope with this change. Don't let this pandemic be your excuse to revert to your old behaviors, but allow it to be your excuse to challenge yourself to be uncomfortable, learn new ways to connect, and try new self-care activities.

This pandemic has taken a toll on all of us because it has changed how we can interact and connect to the people around us.

One small crack doesn't mean that you are broken – it means that you were put to the test and you didn't fall apart.

– Linda Poindexter



Mark Your Calendars

Days of Hope
September 10 – 11

Days of Hope
December 3 – 4

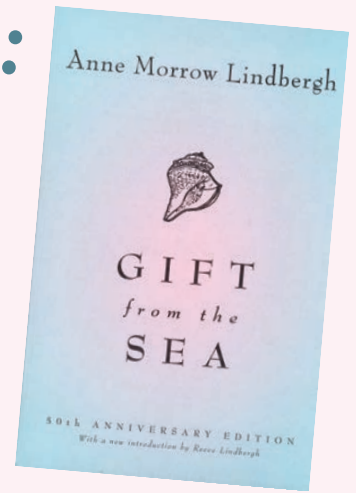


Eileene McRae
Alumni Coordinator,
Pine Grove Behavioral Health

Reading And Recovery:

Gift from the Sea

Written by: Anne Morrow Lindbergh
Anne Morrow Lindbergh (1906-2001)



Not only was this author a brilliant writer, she was also an aviator and the wife of aviator, Charles Lindbergh. After tragically losing her first child in 1932, she went on in life to raise five more children. She was the first American woman to earn a first-class glider pilot's license in 1930, and in 1934, she was the first woman to be awarded the National Geographic Society's Hubbard Medal for her aviation and exploration adventures - WOW, just wow!!

Quotes from *Gift from the Sea*:

"...we choke the space with continuous music, chatter, and companionship to which we do not even listen. It is simply there to fill the vacuum. When the noise stops there is no inner music to take its place. We must re-learn to be alone."

"For it is not physical solitude that actually separates one from other men, not physical isolation, but spiritual isolation."

"When one is a stranger to oneself then one is estranged from others too. If one is out of touch with oneself, then one cannot touch others."

During this time of year, many of us begin to "wanderlust" after the sea, or in our case, the Gulf of Mexico. Therefore, with summer

vacations around the corner, it seemed appropriate for me to introduce to some of you, and to remind others, that *Gift from the Sea* is a GREAT read!! My hope is that many of you will take my recommendation to heart and enjoy this book - I have read it countless times and have thoroughly enjoyed my re-read to prepare for this review.

Those of us who are lucky enough to be living a life of recovery will recall that we were warned when we first began our new way of living, that for us, one of our greatest challenges would be relationships. I now know how very true that is. However, I also know how rewarding healthy relationships are and how they enhance our recovery.

We are also guided in recovery to work diligently at having a balance in our lives. Anne Morrow Lindbergh describes good relationships as being like a "dance," where we attempt to have a natural balance of physical, intellectual, and social components. People in health relationships are like, "...partners moving to the same rhythm, creating a pattern together, and being invisibly nourished by it."

Lindbergh penned *Gift from the Sea* over fifty years ago; interestingly enough, her exploration and relationship tenets prove to be

what still makes healthy relationships today! By drawing parallels to different sea shells and the many components of relationships, the author found that she could much more easily look at her own patterns of relating to others while being in solitude at the sea.

So, go forth and explore your own relationship patterns while reading *Gift from the Sea*, preferably at the Gulf. And now, with the "beach at your back", I hope you will return home with a few shells in your pocket to remind you what phase of relationship needs the most work in your life.

This book can be purchased at Pine Grove's Books and Gifts at 218 South 28th Avenue, Hattiesburg, Mississippi 39402 or by contacting Grace Blackshear at 601-288-4942 or grace.blackshear@forrestgeneral.com. She will be happy to mail your book to you.



Virtual Pine Grove Alumni Reunion a Success

Eileene McRae & Erin Konves
Alumni Coordinators

We were thrilled at the number of alumni members who participated in our inaugural, online reunion. No, it was not the same as being together to celebrate our recovery, but it was delightful to see folks on screen who would have not been able to attend because of living long distances away from our campus.

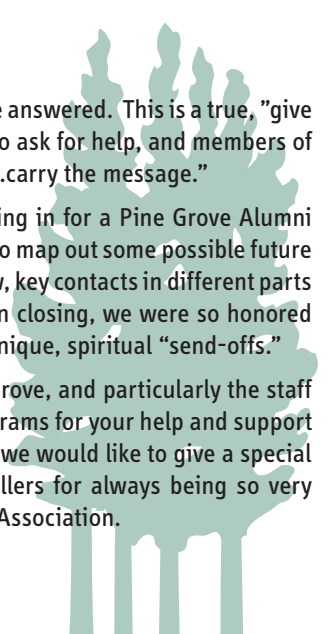
As always, our own Deborah Schiller presented a stellar lecture, "Relationships 911", to help us ALL adapt to living in very close quarters with our loved ones during this pandemic. There seems to be an element of healing just knowing that others are experiencing some of our same struggles.

After lunch, our alums were able to visit their own treatment programs, via zoom, while joining with current patients. This is always a treat, especially for Pine Grove's inpatients because they get an opportunity to see live recovery from people who once sat in their chairs. Introductions

were made and a myriad of questions were answered. This is a true, "give and take" situation because patients get to ask for help, and members of the Alumni Association get a chance to "...carry the message."

Early afternoon saw the alums again tuning in for a Pine Grove Alumni Association meeting where we were able to map out some possible future online events, as well as identify some new, key contacts in different parts of the country for discharging patients. In closing, we were so honored to have David Sellers offer us one of his unique, spiritual "send-offs."

We want to thank all of the staff at Pine Grove, and particularly the staff members in each of the participating programs for your help and support in making this virtual event happen. And, we would like to give a special thanks to Deborah Schiller and David Sellers for always being so very willing to support the Pine Grove Alumni Association.





MILESTONES

JUNE 2020

Thomas L.	18 months
Claire B.	1 year
MaryGrace L.	2 years
Laura L.	6 years

AUGUST 2020

Theresa B.	7 years
Peter D.	10 years
Blake W.	2 years
Camille H.	9 years

JULY 2020

Gigi B.	6 years
Margaret P.	20 years
Mike M.	3 years
Amy C.	6 months

If your sobriety/abstinence date is in **September, October, and November** please email your name and date to alumni@pinegrovetreatment.com

Intensive Workshops

Call 1-888-574-HOPE or visit www.pinegrovetreatment.com/self-improvement-workshops.com for information. Please note schedule is subject to change based on registration.



Pine Grove

Intensive Workshops

Forrest Health®

Gratitude – COSA

(All Gratitude/GP Spouses and Family Welcome)

■ Wednesday – 8:00 p.m. CST
 Conference Call-In #: 319-527-3510
 Access Code: 715268

Questions? Please contact Beth A. at 256-566-8554.

This meeting is chaired by a family alumnus and is not associated with Pine Grove/ForrestHealth.

Write on Our Wall

Join us on Facebook and post your message of hope, get some encouragement and get connected!

Email alumni@pinegrovetreatment.com for access to our private group.

1-888-574-HOPE

www.pinegrovetreatment.com

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