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PASERVIC NEWSLETTER

Integrating Spirituality, Ethics, Values and Counseling

Volume 7 Number 3

December/January

2006-2007

Happy Holidays!

***ATTENTION PASERVIC MEMBERS**

We have a leadership opportunity for someone who would like to expand her or his role and explore her or his potential as a leader. The position of President Elect is available for the 2007-2008 year. The President Elect is part of the voting board of PASERVIC and is mentored by the President for a year before becoming the president the following year. This is a great way to make connections, get support, and contribute your creativity to infusing spirituality in counseling. Contact Joanna Castro at HYPERLINK "mailto:adadelbosque@gmail.com" \t "_blank" adadelbosque@gmail.com or HYPERLINK "mailto:relaxwithruth@gmail.com" \t "_blank" relaxwithruth@gmail.com before January 30th 2007.

Spirituality

Serving Others and Ourselves

Healing, Wholeness, Wellness, Faith, Balance, Spirituality.

I think about these words.

I also think about my connection to something Greater than I am, especially as the Holidays and my birthday roll around, and particularly as I approach the completion of another decade. Birthdays are a time of reflection, and I have been reflecting on this Birthday for two years. I concluded, that serving others and my Higher Power is, and always has been, my most important value.

Putting this idea into action can be slippery-some days *slipping right out of my reach*. On other days, especially if I sit down and meditate, affirm myself, go for a walk, write down my dreams, exercise,

eat right (whew) etc., I feel balanced, loving, compassionate and whole. Then I remember that I am a Spiritual Being having an Earth Walk. And during this Earthwalk I am reminded that in everything I do, I am serving others.

This can be accomplished by smiling at strangers (and friends too of course), reaching out to the sick, sharing ideas, being consciously kind to one's partner, petting our furry friends, taking up a new cause, or choosing to be a good listener. Done from a place of caring, love, and *Practicing the Presence*, as Joel Goldsmith says in his books, we are serving others. By the way, done without a feeling of compassion love, and being present for another we are also serving, but often not in the same balanced and loving way.

On a not so good day, when I am out of balance, I push my Higher Power away, become cranky wanting my way, "shoulding" on myself which only serves to illicit childhood wounds. To the Higher Power, the loving Neutral Energy that serves me unconditionally, it doesn't seem to matter. The "Presence," so patient and kind waits, while I lick my wounds, pick myself up, and remind myself that I am a Co-Pilot with God, One with God.

That's an affirmation I like.

Speaking of affirmations. I started working with them more intentionally. It happened after a recent visit with my son. After the visit we, at my suggestion, formed our own special *Dream Team*. Our exclusive one-on-one *Dream Team*. Everyday I email him a new affirmation. Yesterday he emailed me and said that he loves this one.

Today, I will focus on what I can control, and let go of what I cannot control.

To this end I have now written hundreds of affirmations. And they really do work! When I tell myself good things about myself I feel a greater sense of wholeness, alignment, and spirituality. I become more aware of my actions, my thoughts, and I am more intentional. My faith increases and I am better able to surrender and serve others, all of the words and ways that I define spirituality. And when I feel better I am able to serve others with openness and love. Here's some interesting research that supports affirmations and good deeds.

"Research by Lyubomirsky, Seligman, and others at the University of Pennsylvania asked research participants to think of three good things that happened to them that day and the reason for it before they went to sleep at night. The results were that people focused on good things that happened, which might otherwise have been forgotten because of daily disappointments," researchers said.

Another participant said the exercise "made her notice more good things in her day, and that now she routinely lists 10 or 20 of them rather than just three."

"In another experiment, participants were asked to regularly practice random acts of kindness, things like holding a door open for a stranger or doing a roommate's dishes, for 10 weeks. The idea was to improve a person's self-image and promote good interactions with other people."

"Participants who performed a variety of acts, rather than repeating the same ones, showed an increase in happiness even a month after the experiment was concluded. Those who kept on doing the acts on their own did better than those who didn't."

"Seligman and colleagues reported last year that the exercises increased happiness and reduced depressive symptoms for the six months that researchers tracked the participants. The effect was greater for people who kept doing the exercises frequently."

The research, and I am certain there is more of a similar kind, is support for doing affirmations and visualization. We hear a lot about similar techniques but we don't always take the time to work with affirmations and visualizations. However, they are an excellent way to make one feel better, and they are not just fluff.

Remember the video *What the Bleep do You Know?* "*Neurons that fire together wire together.*" Every time I interrupt any unnecessary negative thought, worry, etc, I remind myself that I am re-wiring my brain. And, as they say in the "Bleep" every time you do it, you re-wire the brain creating feelings of wholeness and balance better able to serve others from a place of love and healing.

Ruth Hoskins, Ph.D. LCSW, BCD President PASERVIC

***Mark your calendars for our May Spring Retreat 2007 a great way to rejuvenate, meet new people, and strengthen relationships. The retreat will be held once again at Mountain**

Dale Farms in McClure Pa., (near Penn State) May 18th, 19th and May 20th, 2007. The cost per person for 2 days is \$130 per person. Private cabins are available for an extra \$20. (10% discount for PASERVIC members). This includes room and board, workshops, (CEU's available) four meals and a light snack on Friday evening. Retreat begins at 6 PM on Friday and ends at Noon on Sunday.

The Importance of Self-Care

Lisa M. May, MA, NCC, LPC

(PASERVIC President Elect)

As counselors, we're expected to be able to provide guidance, support, and education to others. But there are times when this is made even more difficult than usual because of struggles that exist in our own lives. Counselors are not immune to stress, illness, or disappointment. Just as we educate others about the importance of self-care, it is imperative that we pay attention to our own processes, and plan proactively to provide for our own well-being. I would argue that there is even an ethical responsibility in providing for our own self care to avoid approaching a state of impairment.

The following ten suggestions span both the personal and professional realms. By working smarter and living consciously we are better able to meet the demands of the profession that has called us.

Incorporate some form of physical activity into your day. Daily exercise or movement of some kind has long been reported to ease stress, improve physical fitness, and aid in a greater sense of well-being. Even a short walk outside allows for time to connect with nature and gain a new perspective.

Gather a support system. Make time for connections with others, even when your schedule seems tight. Allow others to care for you, and express your feelings to them. We may spend the day surrounded by people, but counseling is often a lonely job. Be open to new

relationships as well as treasuring those around you.

Monitor your own processes. Seek counseling yourself if you are finding things difficult. Pay attention to both old and new wounds and deal with them.

Take care of your body. Sleep when you are tired. Eat when you are hungry. Be more conscious of what your body needs to function efficiently and provide for it. Be willing to set limits, both personally and professionally regarding commitments to allow for periods of rest and relaxation.

Embrace your spiritual side. Spend time in practices that are meaningful to you, and allow you to feel centered. Connect with others to build a community that supports and encourages.

Incorporate play into your life, both in the office and at home. Spend time with children, throw a Frisbee to your dog, laugh, and allow yourself the time and space to feel joyful. Counselors are at risk for compassion fatigue and burn out, as our work is serious business and often deals with traumatic events. Give yourself the freedom to be light and carefree at times.

Seek supervision. Even counselors that have been in the field for years can benefit from a new set of ears. Find someone with whom you can share professional struggles, and make future plans with. Many times our friends or families don't really understand what our jobs entail. Find someone who does and connect with that person.

Expect occupational difficulties surrounding transitions. Early career counselors typically experience anxiety. Job transitions, beginning a private practice, or navigating managed care are all stress producing changes. Talk to others about how you are feeling and what you are experiencing. Remain open to the idea that these feelings may be developmental in nature.

Set boundaries between work and home. Try not to take work home; it will still be there tomorrow. Develop soothing transitions like listening

to your favorite music in the car, participate in activities that nurture yourself when you get home, and try to leave work issues at work.

Maintain a connection to the field. Attend conferences, join groups that interest you, mentor others, or seek mentoring. Remember why you became a counselor and connect with others professionally. It will help to rejuvenate you and bring new ideas into your work.

We are all very busy, and many times leave our own needs for last. By living more consciously and being proactive about self-care, we will be more prepared to combat the stress and strain that is involved in this profession. In taking better care of ourselves, we are also better able to provide quality services to those we work with.

*** A Special Thanks:**

I would like to acknowledge David J. Tobin, PhD, Gannon University, Erie, PA for suggesting the topic for this article.

Eco-Villages

By Joanna Castro

(PASERVIC Past President)

Eco-villages have captured my interest to the point that I am taking a year from work to investigate them. An eco-village has a loose definition but is generally accepted to mean a community of people who have agreed to work together to reduce the human impact on the earth. Some villages work very hard toward becoming sustainable. Sustainability means that their daily needs are met in a way that does not take from the earth without giving back. It means that they are doing their best to reduce the ecological footprint they leave on the earth.

I visited an eco-village last January located in central Mexico. These folks were trying to develop an "artesian economy." They made products that were preferably derived from their own land and were easily replaced, avoiding an imbalance in the ecology of their land. One-man made instruments from gourds that grew in the mountains surrounding the village. The village produced jams, chutneys, and preserves from the variety of fruits that grew on the property. They also sold the coffee that was organically grown, hand picked, and hand

processed. Dwellings were made from cement and clay, which are abundant in the area. An organic garden was in place and the community of people shared responsibility for it's up keep, and it's harvest.

This eco-village had many great ideas, but also struggled to make sustainability a reality. Metals used in the instruments were not sustainable. Driving to Mexico City weekly to sell products certainly increased the ecological footprint left by the instruments. The jams had to be bottled and transported as well. Many of the members did not fulfill their obligation to care for the garden and others ended up over committed and resentful. There was an imbalance of power and resources within the community as well. This led to a power dynamic that impeded healthy relationships amongst the members.

I am very interested in investigating if there might be cultures, or approaches to eco-villages that may be more successful. As our society grows, our demand on nonrenewable recourses increases. We will inevitably run out of fossil fuels. When we do, the luxury of having oranges from California or Florida will disappear. We may find that we will need to eat foods that are grown locally and seasonally. We may find that we have to entertain ourselves in our own community instead of driving or flying to new destinations. We will have to act and live as a community. It will be beneficial to share resources rather than to individually own every convenience and over burden a limited resource pool. We need adept social and communication skills to be able to flourish. Are there places that have figured out how to do this?

Reportedly, Findhorn Scotland, Tui Trust New Zealand, Crystal Waters Australia and many others have figured it out. They live in harmony with each other and the land. They make choices that truly consider how it will effect the seventh generation. I am going to personally experience these places and learn what I can about my cultural assumptions, perceptions, and limitations.

As I see it, sustainability is part of holistic health. For complete health, I need to care for my body, my mind, my spirit, and my environment. It is all connected. **We** are all connected. If you want to track my journey, check out my blog spot at [HYPERLINK "mailto: www.joannasecotravel@wordpress.com" \t "_blank"](mailto:www.joannasecotravel@wordpress.com)
www.joannasecotravel@wordpress.com

Peace and health to all of you this season and beyond. Joanna Castro, M.S., N.C.C., LPC, Past PASERVIC President

2006/ 2007 Executive Board Line-up

President: Ruth Hoskins, Ph.D., LCSW, BCD, is a psychotherapist for families, individuals, and couples, a stress management consultant, certified relationships counselor, and Director of Relaxation International. Ruth is a national speaker and teaches the Psychology of Balance Wellness Program Effortless Meditation Therapy. Ruth was recognized in the 2005 National Register's Who's Who in Executives and Professionals. She teaches Health Psychology, the Mind-Body Connection at Chestnut Hill College. She is the author of *No Time for Down Time? Easy Stress Solutions for You* and *Active Relaxation*.

Past-President: Joanna Castro, MS, NCC, LPC, is a therapist for a community mental health agency in central PA. She received her degree from Shippensburg University and went on to earn over 80 hours of credits studying play therapy. Joanna serves all ages, working with individuals, families and community programs to enhance the well being of her community. She is an outdoor Behavioral Healthcare in Mt Gretna.

President-Elect: Lisa M. May, MA, NCC, LPC, is entering her 5th year in the Counseling Psychology doctoral program at Gannon University. She resides in Greenville with her wonderful husband and three children (ages 5, 6, and 13). Lisa's interests include stress/coping, wellness, and diversity research.

Secretary-Treasurer:

Shannon Deets earned a BS in Biology and a minor in modern dance from Allegheny College, MS in Community Counseling from Gannon University and is currently working on her Ph.D. from Gannon in Counseling Psychology. Shannon is the clinic coordinator at ACCG in Meadville, Pa. Shannon is married and has one child Rivan Alexander Deets who is 10 months old. Professional interests include multiculturalism particularly with looking at effective therapy to be used with clients who are rural or have limited income. Shannon has an interest in ethics, and of course spirituality in counseling. Shannon likes to camp, dance, drum, canoe, and spelunk.

Eastern Representative: Rhonda Myers, MS, NCC, LPC is a therapist for Philhaven Behavioral Healthcare in Mt Gretna, working primarily with adults and adolescents. She received her counseling degree from

Shippensburg University and has experience in inpatient, Partial hospital, college counseling, and outpatient settings. She is currently involved in a post-masters certificate program for organizational counseling through Johns Hopkins University. Rhonda lives in Elizabethtown and has three daughters (ages 18, 17, and 15).

Western Representative: David Tobin, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor and Director of the Community Counselor Program at Gannon University. Interests include teaching counseling and spirituality, African drumming, and outdoor activities.

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