

FOR MAINE'S RECOVERY COMMUNITY

ISSUE 2 • MAY/JUNE 2019

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# Journey

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On the cover:  
Sarah Siegel and Kathy Potter,  
recovering with help of meditation.  
Photo by Brian Delaney




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# A letter from the publisher



## Recovery is Possible!

Recovery is possible! Those are three simple words but an incredibly powerful declaration. Journey, with that message, has received such a positive response that it is almost overwhelming. It is a heartwarming response and one filled with the hope.

On March 1, 10,000 copies of the inaugural issue of the magazine were delivered to the Journey office in Portland. By March 14, Gov. Janet Mills had a copy in her hands. The Journey team was invited to the State House April 4 to meet the governor and be honored by the House of Representatives. (A special thanks to Ron Springel, Gordon Smith and Rep. Charlotte Warren for arranging the visit.)

We're grateful for the many volunteers who have joined the team to help distribute it. With calls and email requests from as far north as Presque Isle and as far south as York, we've been able to spread the message of Recovery farther than we intended at this stage, and in a lovely, almost organic way. We even have 4 readers in a small recovery group in Ruwais, United Arab Emirates!

I've had quite a few conversations in recent weeks that develop from a mutual connection in pain -- the pain of losing a loved one, the pain of watching a loved one in active addiction, the pain of personally remembering just how hard it is to move from active addiction to

a path of Recovery and to stay there.

There's a connection in being able to relate to one another. It brings sad tears to my eyes, but then, so movingly, my heart becomes warm and full. Next comes a big, deep, full-bodied breath as the pain is shared. You can almost physically feel the pain lift. Pain shared is halved. Then there's a tighter connection, a bond of knowing we understand each other and that we're not alone. There is peace and ease in this new connection, and if there's one thing that can battle addiction, it's connection.

The conversations then shift to our circle of influence = how can I help? What specifically can I do today? For me and for Journey the response is to amplify hope. Our signature bracelet features only these two words to remind us that we get to make a decision in every interaction and to ask ourselves "what will I amplify today"? Today, I choose to amplify hope and to celebrate freedom from addiction.

As much as pain shared is halved, joy shared is doubled. Our column People Like Us Live Like This highlights the successes and dreams come true of those in recovery. And On The Journey provides an opportunity for you to share how you're living and dealing with this life in Recovery. Go to our website and click on "Share My Journey" and tell us what's working for you today. The impact of you sharing cannot be overstated.

Sober sister hugs,

*Carolyn*

Carolyn Delaney, Publisher



Journey team visits Governor Mills; photo by Brian Delaney (left to right) Robert Cabeca, Sarah Kelly, Leslie Trainer, Carole Fountaine, Maureen Ausbrook, Barbara Conner, Keagan Delaney, Carolyn Delaney, Carolanne Sullivan, Governor Janet Mills, Nancy Wolach, Shawna Cohen, Mary Atwood, Sarah Siegel, Sue Dancil, Lisa Twombly, and Michael Geneseo

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# FIT FOR RECOVERY

Whether it's by tough love in a gym, loving kindness in a yoga studio or amazing grace in a walk through the woods, a healthy body promotes self-respect, which in turn promotes recovery.



Keagan Delaney takes an all-around approach to fitness. Photo by Brain Delaney

By Amy Paradysz

**J**ust as there are many paths to recovery, there are many paths to physical fitness.

Some like the camaraderie of gyms and exercise classes, while others prefer the calm of a yoga class or a solitary walk on the beach. Whatever the path, getting your body healthy again after the damage

done to it in active addiction is vital for those in recovery. Feeling physically fit and at your best also improves self-esteem and gives confidence, two important tools in maintaining recovery.

Keagan Delaney, 28, in recovery for two years, says he “lives for fitness,” but he’s no gym rat. Rather, he takes

a broader, all-around fitness approach: fitness of the mind, emotions, spirit and body. He tries to learn something new every day, works to understand his emotions and those of others to strengthen relationships, prays to his higher power and works out.

“As humans, the physical is the easiest understood. Action

precedes understanding,” he says, adding that physical fitness helps him build the endurance to effectively work through his other fitness goals.

Exercise reminded Tom Shanahan of the joy that is found in sober—and active—lifestyle. When he kicked alcohol and cocaine eight years ago, he went to rehab and worked his way through the 12 Steps, and he also took thousands of steps around the Eastern Prom and other scenic locations.

“All the nature around Portland is the perfect environment to get sober,” says Shanahan, the author of “Spiritual Adrenaline: A Lifestyle Plan to Nourish and Strengthen Your Recovery.” “I would go to Portland Head Light or paddleboard to Fort Gorges. I wanted to get out of bed every morning. I wanted to see the sunrise. Combining the nature of Maine with the traditional step work and incorporating nutrition and exercise can really supercharge a recovery. Moving your body will make you less likely to relapse.”

Shanahan also saw Dr. Michael Bedecs, a Portland-based manipulative therapy specialist, and found he had high triglycerides, high levels of bad cholesterol and high cortisol levels, high white blood cell counts, and low testosterone.

“I had all the markers of someone who had been abusing their body for years,” says Shanahan, who turned to personal trainer and sports nutritionist Michael Foley for help. “Once I started reducing sugar, caffeine and nicotine, these conditions started to resolve themselves. Nutrition isn’t a cure-all, but it makes a big difference.”



Tom Shanahan, author of *Spiritual Adrenaline*. Photo courtesy of Tom Shanahan

**All the nature around Portland is the perfect environment to get sober.**

## Take It Outside

By Amy Paradysz

Whether you’ve done the 12 steps or you’re still working your way through them, this is a glorious time of year to get in several thousand steps under a blue Maine sky. Here are a few suggestions:

- When life gets a bit rocky, a brisk walk with a view of a lighthouse pairs cardiovascular exercise with fresh sea air and a visual symbol of strength, guidance and safe harbor. There are walking paths at Spring Point Ledge Lighthouse (South Portland), Portland Breakwater



Portland Head Light at Fort Williams Park, Cape Elizabeth Photo by Mercedes Mehling on Unsplash

Light (South Portland) and Fort Williams, home of Portland Head Light (Cape Elizabeth).

Get a new perspective by changing your elevation at

Mount Agamenticus in York, Burnt Meadow Mountain in Brownfield or Higgins Mountain in Georgetown.

- Kick off another day of sobriety with a walk at sunrise. Anywhere will do, and it doesn’t need to take all morning. But for a spectacular sunrise stroll, try the Cliff Walk at York Beach Harbor.
- Walk the beach at Ocean Park, a dry community on the southern end of Old Orchard, and stop for a game of shuffleboard at the corner of West Grand and Randall avenues.
- Hike the 1.5-mile perimeter of Mackworth Island State Park in Falmouth for Casco Bay views, quiet resting spots, fairy houses and woody trails.



Mike Foley

Over the past 30 years, Foley estimates he has worked with at least 1,000 clients who are trying to stop drinking.

“When you’re trying to quit a habit that is very addictive, it’s hard if you’re not eating well and exercising,” Foley says. “If you’re working out and you’re getting healthy, you think you’re working too hard to go back on that roller coaster.”

Foley, who coaches at World’s Gym in Portland, outlines some of the reasons exercise can be an integral component of long-term drug or alcohol recovery.

“Exercise releases endorphins, and it gives you a kind of rush,” he says, noting that depression is common battle amongst people in recovery. “Plus, if a workout is part of your daily routine, you have less idle time. When you’re trying to beat a chemical addiction, you need structure and routine because the more routine you have you usually make better choices. Separate exercise and nutrition from feelings and just make it a habit, a part of your day.”

Whether it’s called “tough love” in a gym, “loving kindness” in a yoga studio or “amazing grace” in a spiritual setting, true recovery may hinge on self-respect.

“When people get off the drugs and into exercise, they feel so good about themselves that they

treat people, including themselves, better,” Foley says. “They’re usually kind of competitive; that’s how they beat the drug. So I say, ‘Life’s too short, let’s be great. Fitness is something you can excel at.’”

But don’t overdo it.

“People give up a ‘bad addiction’ for a ‘good one’ that becomes problematic when they take it to the extreme. It’s about balance,” Shanahan says. “Sobriety is a long-term plan to stay happy and healthy.”

For someone still in crisis, in the depths of despair or with a quieter nature, yoga may be a more natural way of coming back to the body with respect.

“Yoga brings an awareness of personal needs and bodily health,” says Leslee Clark, owner of Yogave, a donation-based yoga studio on Route 1 in Falmouth. “Yoga can be a beneficial tool for healing or recovery, whether it’s from illness, addiction or grief. Having lost a child to cancer two years ago, yoga has become more important to me as a tool to cope with anxiety and depression.”



Yoga is a natural way of coming back to the body with respect.

## The more routine you have, you usually make better choices.

Yoga typically involves movement with breath, and, of course, moving through the postures has physical benefits. But even in life’s most difficult moments, when getting to a yoga class isn’t realistic, Clark comes back to breath and back to loving kindness for the mental, emotional and spiritual benefits.

In the last six months of her son’s life, she lived in a state of fear, as one medical emergency followed right into the next.

“During that time,” she says, “my yoga practice consisted of repeating the ancient ‘Loving Kindness’ blessing: ‘May I be happy, may I be healthy, may I be free from hard, may I live with ease.’ It’s a mindfulness practice.”

Amy Paradysz is a freelance writer that lives in Scarborough.

# How Exercise Can Help You Build Stability

Painful. Difficult. Draining. Isolating. These are words people who go through addiction might use to describe their condition. Addiction of any sort is a devastating condition that causes as much physical disability as it does mental. There is no denying that recovery has its challenges, but it doesn't have to be complicated. Alongside traditional therapies, exercise can work wonders for recovery through positive metabolic and mental benefits.

## EXERCISE AND MENTAL HEALTH

People recovering from addiction also tend to suffer from depression. Although the exact cause is still unknown, scientific studies have established an association between the two conditions. However, the road to recovery is challenging enough without the struggle with mental health. This is where exercise and daily routine can help those struggling with these problems. Daily exercise is a proven method to help treat depression. One study followed people with major depression for a period of 10 months to measure the effect of aerobic exercise over traditional medication. Surprisingly it concluded that long term aerobic exercise was a feasible therapeutic treatment.

Perhaps there is nothing more accessible, easier or more helpful than plain old exercise. Exercise proves again and again to be beneficial for those suffering from the mental health aspects of their addiction recovery.

## EXERCISE FOR ADDICTION TREATMENT

Most people have heard of the natural feel-good chemicals released by the brain during exercise. These chemicals called endorphins also help promote feelings of well-being and give people more energy. This natural chemical cocktail helps addicts feel happier and makes it easier to take back control of their lives. Even moderate amounts of exercise such as a daily 30 minute walk could improve confidence and encourage social interaction.



This shows that exercise is a lot more powerful than most people might have guessed. In fact, another 2014 study on exercise and addiction found that aerobic exercises helped members of the study stay abstinent for long periods of time and reduced relapse rates. Now that the benefits of exercise are understood, the next hurdle is trying to incorporate it into daily routine.

## THE TICKET TO STABILITY

Recovering addicts would be the first to tell you that recovery is painful, isolating, draining and plain difficult. But the answer is simple. The ticket to stability is routine. It could be as simple as walking the dog or even a full on aerobic exercise routine. The proof is in the science. Long term exercise can and will give people the boost they need on the road to recovery. Build a routine of healthy habits today and success is sure to come.



Photo by Deniz Altindas on Unsplash

# Quieting the mind for mental health

Meditation may come hard at first, but it's worth it

By Lara Santoro

**S**arah Siegel's first experience with meditation brought neither peace nor joy. It took place at yet another detox center and all she got, from her own mind, was a blast of poison directed against her frightened, malnourished, self. "You're ugly, you're gross, you're just a dirty junkie, you don't deserve to live, that sort of stuff," remembers Siegel, 36, "The violence was unbelievable but I was able to watch it for the first time ever."

Kathy Potter, 60, heard an equally unpleasant voice. Its accusations were milder – "Who are you kidding, you a meditator? You phony, you cheat," – but the self-loathing was the same.

The two women had recovery in common – but there all similarities stopped. The first was a

drifter, a rebel, the second a housewife steeped in every imaginable comfort. Yet in both of them the sense of enslavement was nearly total, the thirst for freedom so deep that meditation, once started, eventually became a way of life.

Meditation can positively impact overall wellness. As a recovery tool, it quiets those negative inner voices, promotes mindfulness and allows practitioners to get a handle on their emotions. It is a common part of rehab programs worldwide and, for many, meditation is an integral part of their ongoing recovery efforts.

Left free to rampage, Siegel and Potter both realized, the mind had nothing but darkness. Observed, it gradually quieted until it became

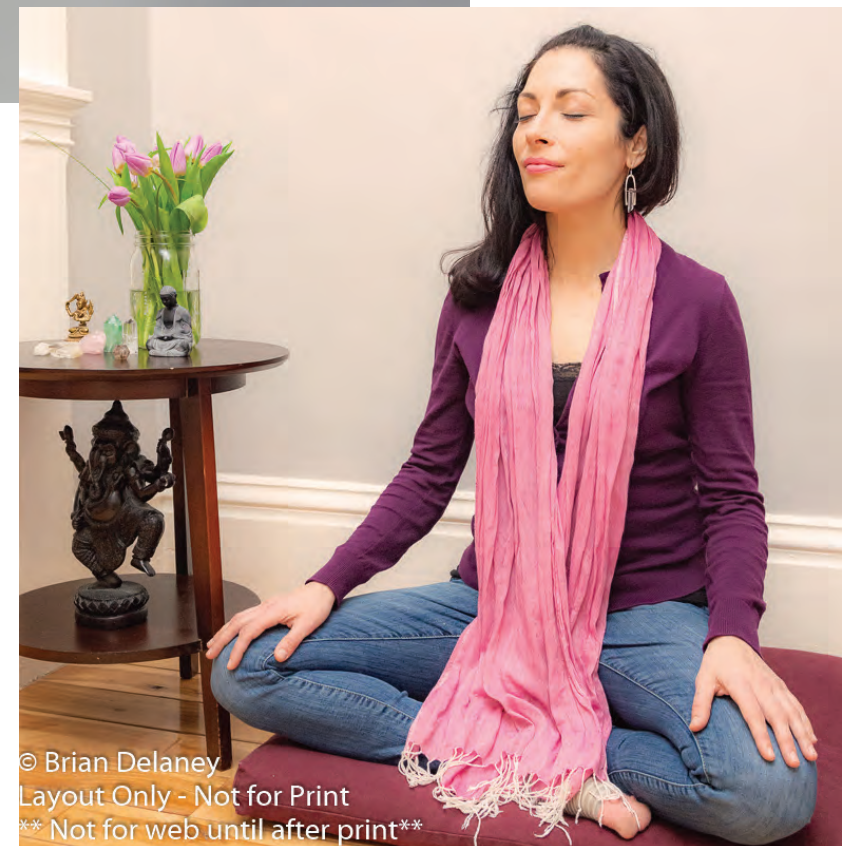
still. In that stillness, says Siegel, who now teaches meditation, was conscious contact with what she calls "the unchanging, ground of being." The god of the 12 Steps, she says, "is an experience, a living experience," fully accessible through meditation ultimately adding up to "nothing less than freedom."

Siegel's addiction had her stripping in clubs, captive to both fentanyl, heroin and IV OxyContin. She had sworn never to sell her body or put a needle in her arm. At age 21 she was selling her body "to keep the needle in my arm," she says. She hit bottom one day doing nothing special, "just shooting up alone in my room, over 1500 miles away from my family." For some reason, on that particular day she understood she was going to die. "I got on my knees and I said, 'I don't know who the f... you are, but I love my son so please help me,'" she says.

In a kind of furor, she did something she had never done before: she flushed every gram, every pill, down the toilet. She'd raced through the first three steps of Alcoholics Anonymous in some distant past, and now she took personal

inventory as suggested by the fourth. As she wrote her inventory, she felt "poison flowing out of me." Finally, she sat down and meditated. "The theistic model of AA never did it for me," says Siegel, who completed a chaplaincy program and is now an interfaith minister in Freeport, "so I chose Buddhism. I lived and breathed Tibetan Buddhism," until the chronic pain of Lyme disease forced her off her cushion and into real life. "It was a gift," she says. "I had to weave my practice into everyday life." With the repetition, says Siegel, came "a strengthening of that part of the prefrontal cortex that controls the fight or flight response," in other words, the part of the brain that regulates fear.

While Siegel was busy transforming herself, Potter was sitting alone at a bar on Congress Street pretending to have dinner while in reality drinking herself nearly senseless. "I would look



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Sarah Siegel  
Photo by Brian Delaney

over at the people who were sitting at the table laughing and I remember feeling so alone," says Potter. She had left her husband and a life of ease and comfort and moved to Maine from Massachusetts. In her late 40s then, she was pursuing a degree in sociology and criminology at USM.

Her drinking, however, was only getting worse. One Fourth of July weekend she bought "the biggest bottle of pre-mixed margaritas I could find" and drank all but one quarter of it. The next morning, she poured what was left down the drain and went to her first AA meeting. She got a sponsor, started working the steps, and got through her son's wedding without drinking a drop. She got her bachelor's degree – both her kids came to her graduation – and kept going to meetings. But something was missing, she says.

She realized what it was when she walked into the Shambhala Center Heart of Recovery meetings in Portland at around six months sober. "I knew straight away that there was something there," recalls Potter, "People were just crammed in there, sitting on cushions -- people from sober houses, all these guys covered in tattoos." All Potter wanted at that point was to quiet her mind, to "stop the racing thoughts." At the Center, she found a bookcase. She started borrowing the books, then she started buying them.

She deepened her meditation by attending weekend retreats at various Shambhala centers, completing three levels of their Heart of Warriorship program, while paradoxically fighting feelings of inadequacy in the privacy of her own practice. "I had this idea that if you don't meditate for one hour in the morning and one hour at night it's not enough," says Potter, "So here I am, a failure. Here's one more thing I won't stick to, one more thing I can't do." A meditation instructor taught her to be gentler with herself and now

Potter is perfectly content with 20 minutes a day. "She also taught me that I have the answers inside myself. She taught me to trust my own intuition because I have a strong intuition."

Following which, she took a walk on the beach with a man she hardly knew. It was New Year's Eve Day. The wind was like a razor blade, she says. A year later, he goes to every Shambhala meeting with her.



Brian Delaney  
Kathy Potter  
Photo by Brian Delaney

Lara Santoro is a writer in Portland.

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# HOW TO start MEDITATING

A beginner's guide for those who think they can't do it

By Sarah Siegel



Photo by Brian Delaney

Meditation is a practice of "non-doing." This may sound strange at first because we are conditioned to think more of the things we are "doing" and less of the ways we are "being."

Meditation is about learning to connect to a deeper part of the self, which lies beyond thoughts, feelings and physical sensations, yet isn't separate from them. This deeper part of our self is always open, awake and at peace. It is untouched by anything from our past and can't be harmed by anything in our future.

This deeper part of our self is called many different names, depending on what religion or spiritual tradition one believes in. Some of these names are: our inner wisdom, our soul, Christ Light, Buddha Nature, our intuition, our Highest Self, Bodhi Mind and Higher Power.

There are many methods for connecting to this deeper part of our self and meditation is only one of them. There are many types of meditation as well.

One type is Mindfulness Meditation. While it has roots in Buddhist practice, it is secular and can be used by anyone of any spiritual or religious tradition. "Paying attention on purpose in the present moment with an attitude of non-judgment" is my definition of Mindfulness Meditation. If either of those two pieces is missing, you're not really practicing Mindfulness Meditation.

Here are the five steps to begin a Mindfulness Meditation practice:



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\* Providence Retreat is not affiliated with AA

# 1

## FIND A COMFORTABLE SEATED POSITION.

A chair, propped up against cushions in bed, seated on the floor, all of these are fine. However, sitting is better than lying down, as a favorite meditation teacher of mine, Jack Kornfield, instructs: “meditation is a practice of ‘falling awake’, rather than ‘falling asleep.’”

# 2

## CHECK IN WITH YOUR POSTURE.

You don't need to sit perfectly straight and unflinching in order to meditate (although that is one way to practice). Instead, a favorite Buddhist teacher of mine, Lama Willa Miller, instructs us to have a “strong back and a soft front” in our meditation posture. Take a moment to notice your spine and your back. Find that place between being very rigid and upright and loose and hunched over. Kornfield says to sit “upright and dignified, halfway between heaven and earth.” Experiment with your posture, notice what feels best for you and your body. Right here, from the beginning, practice listening to your body with compassion.

# 3

## TUNE INTO YOUR BREATH.

Now we learn to swing the spotlight of our attention to an area of focus called an “anchor.” The anchor is where we return to when we notice we've been pulled away by strong thoughts, feelings and sensations. Returning to the anchor helps us strengthen our ability to focus at will, instead of always being pulled from here to there (and everywhere!) by our mind. For this basic practice, make your breath your anchor, specifically the sensations of the breath at a particular place in the body. You can use the edge of the nostrils and notice the sensations there as the air enters and exits the body. You can also use the rise and fall of the abdomen as your anchor and the sensations there as the breath expands and contracts. If it feels difficult to connect to the breath in either place, try putting one hand on your abdomen and feeling the rise and fall as the breath flows in and out of the body. Don't be afraid to experiment or to switch to another anchor if one is hard to connect with.

# 4

## RETURN TO THE ANCHOR WHEN YOU NOTICE YOU'VE DRIFTED AWAY.

Remember the attitude of non-judgment part? Here is where it begins to really come into play. Do not judge your thinking mind. Thinking is what minds do, just as hearts beat and lungs breathe. There is no need to resist, get upset at, or judge the thinking mind. Instead, when you notice you have been pulled away from your anchor are caught up in thoughts, simply and silently say to yourself, “thinking.” Then return once again to your anchor and feel the movement

of the breath. This means that we do not say to ourselves, “You stupid idiot, why aren't you focusing on the breath?” or “Why can't I stop thinking?” If thoughts like that arise, see if you can allow them to pass gently, without taking them too seriously. Be gentle on yourself. It is of zero benefit to infuse meditation practice with an attitude of self-hatred. Meditation need not be another thing that you tell yourself you stink at doing.

Also, don't try and stop your thoughts. This is a common misunderstanding of meditation and the reason that so many people give up the practice. Thoughts are normal and natural, and Mindfulness Meditation is a way to get to know them better and learn to strengthen your ability to swing that spotlight of your attention at will. And finally, even if you are lost in thought for the majority of the time, guess what? You are still meditating! When you realize you have drifted away from the anchor and return to it, you are meditating. You are slowly learning to return home to yourself and this ever present, eternal now moment.

# 5

## CONTINUE FOR 5-15 MINUTES AND REJOICE IN YOUR EFFORTS.

The amount of time you practice meditation is important, as is how realistic and kind you are to yourself in your expectations. Again, be gentle on yourself. For many, it is not at all practical to expect to sit for an hour in meditation every day, especially if we are just learning how to be healthy and present in general. Be realistic about the amount of time you can commit to your practice. It is more beneficial to do 5 minutes every day than 35 minutes once a week. Regularity is important when strengthening your ability to swing the spotlight to your attention. If you miss a session, be kind to yourself again. You are in the process of learning a new skill and beating yourself up won't help you get there. In fact, it's best to celebrate your willingness to try something new, while reminding yourself that you are growing into this practice. When you begin a meditation practice, you are committing to your inner world in a new way and this is something to truly honor and appreciate. Ultimately, you'll keep coming back to the practice if you don't overwhelm yourself by trying to sit for too long right from the start. Five minutes is a perfect time to start with. Enjoy your process. 🎧

*Sarah Siegel of Freeport is an ordained interfaith minister, Mindfulness Meditation coach and writer.*

# How To Focus on Emotional Fitness for



By Carolyn Delaney

**R**ecovery from addiction isn't just a matter of getting and staying sober. Removing toxic substances from your life is the first step on the road to recovery - and a very important one to celebrate! But recovery is an ongoing process that involves healing your life on all levels: physical, spiritual, mental and emotional. Like any disease, addiction requires a whole course of holistic treatment that involves ongoing self-discovery and growth. In addiction, our emotional world can include a lot of anxiety, fear, paranoia, shame and anger. That's why it's important to be tuned into emotional fitness as one of your primary recovery goals. Here are some techniques that can help you to cope with life's stresses and maintain healthy relationships during your recovery.

## Pay Attention

The first step in emotional fitness is to pay attention to thoughts, feelings, moods, and behaviors, both positive and negative, that we may have been masking or running away from during active addiction. Avoiding emotions can be exhausting and detrimental to health and well-being. The goal shouldn't be to avoid being unhappy but to be okay with being unhappy.

Sharpening our ability to notice when and why we are experiencing pleasant and unpleasant emotions will help to develop adaptive reactions and coping mechanisms. Ask yourself what you are reacting to and analyze the thoughts behind your emotions.

## Mindfulness

Mindfulness is the practice of staying in the present moment. It helps you to regulate your emotions by being aware of them and reacting appropriately. Mindfulness entails a judgment-free awareness of both our internal and external environments that allows you to accept your feelings and emotions rather than letting them overwhelm you. Breathing exercises can draw attention to your breath, diminishing stress and reducing the feelings of anxiety, shame, anger or depression. Focusing on something immediate and present help to cut down the background noise in our heads that causes us to seek relief in drugs or alcohol.

## Affirmations

Beyond surrounding yourself with positive people and building positive coping skills, affirmations and mantras are wonderful tools to help you keep a positive mindset. Daily affirmations are positive phrases that you repeat to yourself throughout the day, every day, that help guide you in the right direction. They can help bolster you when you think to yourself that you can't do it and want to give up. Try repeating one of the following affirmations or create some of your own:

- Every day, in every way, I am getting better.
- I am worthy of great things.
- I like the person I'm becoming.
- All of my problems have a solution.
- The past has no power over me anymore.
- I am strong, fierce and brave.
- I feel amazing when I am happy and healthy.

Devoting time to your emotional fitness helps lay the groundwork for a healthier future. Practice these steps in order to create contentment and balance in the present day and stay on the course of recovery and long-lasting health.

*Carolyn Delaney is the publisher of Journey Magazine*

# MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR 'GET WELL JOB'

By David Lee

Get Well Jobs can play an important role when you begin the recovery process and are in “starting life over” mode.

A Get Well Job is any job that does not cause undue pressure and bring too many intellectual or emotional demands, compared to the profession you were in prior to starting recovery.

While the term is often used in sober living houses when someone is ready to re-enter the work world, it is just as applicable if you lost a job when you hit bottom and are starting the recovery process or have been incarcerated and are about to re-enter the work world.

Without making too many demands, a Get Well Job won't take your focus on staying clean and sober. The right Get Well Job provides important structure, renewed confidence in your ability to be in the work world, and a chance to “get in the groove” of going to work every day. It can also give you a current job to put on your resume and—if you leave on good terms—a references for future jobs.

Choosing—and knowing when to move on from—a Get Well Job is an important part of recovery.

Meet Mike Elovitz.

Before moving to Portland to live in a sober living house, Elovitz had a demanding and successful consulting business in New York City. He had two Get Well Job, one he liked and the other he didn't.

His first Get Well Job was at Brown Trading Company in Portland, where his primary responsibility was smoking fish for high-end restaurant customers. After that seasonal job ended, he worked as a cashier at a convenience store.

Elovitz now works as a direct service provider for Goodwill, where he helps people with disabilities navigate the demands of daily life, a job he finds both demanding and deeply satisfying.

Here are some of the important lessons and takeaways he shared in a recent interview.

## GET WELL JOB LESSONS & TAKEAWAYS

**Embrace Humility**—“It was humbling. I went from owning my own business to punching a time clock and doing manual labor. I had shame around it. I kept asking myself, ‘How did I get here?’ He remembers



Mike Elovitz

being at a family Thanksgiving gathering and not wanting to tell anybody what he was doing for work. He eventually

stopped hiding it and the shame dissipated, as it does when we share our secrets with others we can trust.

**Take Care of the Mind/Body Connection and It Will Take Care of You**—When asked for his No 1 advice to someone about successfully navigating the Get Well Job chapter of recovery, Elovitz responded without hesitation: “Diet and exercise—make sure you're doing both of those right. Doing all the sobriety stuff is obviously critical, but if you are not taking care of yourself physically, your chances of staying sober will be cut in half...let alone your ability to handle responsibilities on the job.” Exercise doesn't have to mean going to the gym, he noted. It can mean walking more and driving less or simply parking farther away from

stores.

**Use The Time for Soul Searching and Career Exploration**—While working at his Get Well Job, Elovitz engaged in career coaching, both to identify potential next-step jobs and explore what is called Right Livelihood: work that fits our personality and strengths, and satisfies our soul. This soul searching enabled him to connect with his career vision of getting involved in disaster relief work. He also recommends making the most of this time by keeping some kind of journal and writing down your experiences and observations on the job, which can become important clues to your “next right action” in growing your career.

**Remind Yourself: “This is**

**a chapter. It's not the whole story.”**—This is a mantra I've found useful over the years both for myself and when coaching others going through tough spells or finding themselves in less-than-ideal situations. On days you find yourself feeling under-employed and asking “How did I get here?”, remember that “This too shall pass” and that you're experiencing just a chapter in your Life Story. Elovitz recognizes that his current job, his first post-Get Well Job, is also a chapter. His goal is to work in the disaster relief field for an organization like FEMA or the Red Cross.

**Make Lemonade Out of the Lemons**—While Elovitz found his first Get Well Job satisfying, he couldn't stand his second one. While he liked the owner and manager, he found having to

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deal with difficult customers day in and day out to be emotionally draining. Yet, he doesn't regret having that job.

"I'm actually glad I did it because it taught me a lot of what I DON'T want in a job, and it was great motivation to stay sober."

**Be Impeccably Responsible—**

Acting responsibly on the job—coming in on time, calling when you're going to be late, etc.—not only makes good work habits part of who you are and helps you rebuild your career, it also makes acting responsibly and holding yourself accountable in all aspects of your life just what you do," which obviously strengthens your sobriety.

**Don't Leave Until You Have Another Job Lined Up—**This is another way of making being responsible and accountable



a habit. If you're finding that you dread going to work, fight the urge to be impulsive and walk out the door. By refusing to slip back into old habits of impulsivity and irresponsibility, you weaken their hold over you, while making responsible actions more habitual. That being said, if you feel your sobriety is being compromised because of how the job is affecting you, talk to your sponsor about the pros and cons of leaving without a new job lined up.

Getting the right Get Well Job, and knowing how to make the most of it, can make a huge difference in your ability to remain clean and sober—and in the quality of your recovery. The above guiding principles can help you make the most of this important part of the recovery process.



David Lee is a career coach at [HeartAtWorkAssociates.com](http://HeartAtWorkAssociates.com).

**Readers Share**

**"Prayer"**

Graphite and ink,  
by Stacey Shea

Stacey Shea is a woman in recovery reconnecting with art as a practice of prayer/meditation. For Shea, creating art is an intuitive and healing flow from within. She works in a variety of styles -- expressive abstraction, narratives and illustrations. She's inspired by nature in all her work. Nature, she says, is where she's grounded and connected with the divine -- the universe. Shea has studied art at University of Maine Augusta, University of Southern Maine and Maine College of Art.



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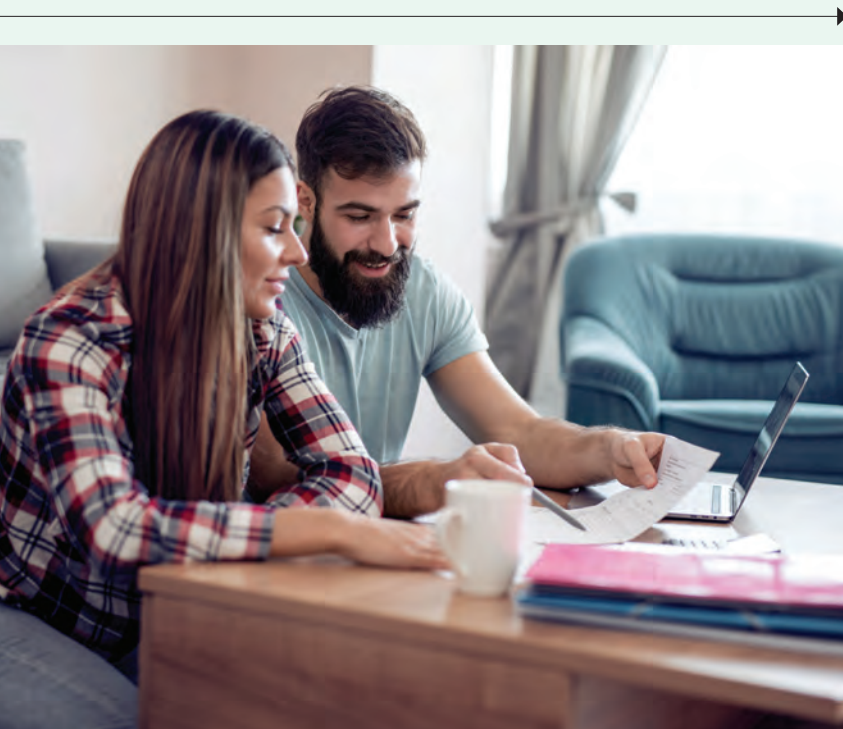
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MAGAZINE



## Know Your Credit Score As Your First Step In Financial

# Fitness

By Casey McClurkin



**W**hen considering your health and wellness, you might think of your diet, exercise, work-related stress, sleep patterns, etc. But do you ever stop to consider your financial health and wellness? A lot of people do not. Many are in the dark—sometimes by choice—about their financial health. But just like when you have strained a muscle or pinched a nerve, if you ignore your bills and debts and money problems, they don't just disappear. They tend to get worse.

Every year you go to the doctor for a physical and your doctor weighs you, takes your blood pressure, listens to your lungs and heart and may even draw blood for a more detailed analysis of your health. Lucky for you, a financial check up is nowhere near as invasive and you can do it on your own, if you wish, or you can hire a professional to help you along the way.

You may think that you are “bad with money” and there is nothing you can do. But just like we learn when we are getting sober, there is a solution. Over the next few months, we will go over some basic foundational items to establish a baseline for your finances, and over time,

you can improve on these things to get healthier and less stressed around money.

There are five key numbers to measure your financial health when you are just starting out in financial recovery. They are:

- Credit score
- Debt utilization ratio
- Debt to income ratio
- Savings rate
- Net worth

Today let's talk about credit scores. Do you know what yours is? Do you know why it's important? Do you know how to improve it? Lastly, do you know how to protect it?

Your credit score represents your “credit worthiness” to banks and lenders, insurance companies, landlords and

even your employers. There are two types of credit scores, and I am referring to the FICO score in this article. Credit scores range from 300 to 850; the average score is 695. If you do not know your score, you can check it for free at [www.experian.com](http://www.experian.com) or [www.creditkarma.com](http://www.creditkarma.com). Checking your own credit score will not affect it. According to [www.ValuePenguin.com](http://www.ValuePenguin.com), households in the state of Maine have an average credit score of 689, 2.91 credit cards and \$5,784 in consumer debt.

Why is this number so important? According to the companies that compile your

credit history, the higher the number, the safer it is to lend to you, rent to you and employ you. Basically, a high credit score means you are less of a credit risk. The higher your score, the lower your interest rate is likely to be when you apply for a credit card, car loan or mortgage, potentially saving you thousands of dollars over the life of a loan. A landlord might look at your credit score and use it to determine if you're likely to default on your rent. An employer might use the score to


measure your trustworthiness.

Now that you know what your credit score is and why it is important, how do you improve it? There are several things

you can do. First, you'll want to get a copy of your credit report and review it for accuracy. Again, you can do so at [www.experian.com](http://www.experian.com) for free. If there is any inaccurate information on the report, you can dispute it with the credit reporting agency. Second, make sure you pay your bills on time, all the time. Third, start to pay down your credit cards. If your available credit is \$1,000 on a credit card, keep the balance below \$500, or 50 percent utilization, to improve your score. Fourth, do not apply for new credit

cards because every inquiry on your credit can cause it to go down. Also, do not close old credit cards. Having credit history is important in keeping your score higher. You can monitor your credit monthly if you set up an account at [www.creditkarma.com](http://www.creditkarma.com) and watch it grow over time.

Lastly, and maybe most importantly, how do you protect your credit? You can “freeze” your credit so that no inquiries can be made without your express permission. This can keep someone from opening a loan or credit card in your name. You can visit the Maine Bureau of Consumer Credit to start the process for free: [https://www.maine.gov/pfr/consumercredit/file\\_freeze\\_info.htm](https://www.maine.gov/pfr/consumercredit/file_freeze_info.htm)

All of the websites listed here provide a wealth of valuable information about credit and credit scores. If you need help navigating this issue, seek help from a professional. A financial coach, financial advisor, debt counselor, or the Finance Authority of Maine ([www.famemaine.com](http://www.famemaine.com)) can be a great resource for you, no matter where you are in your financial recovery. 



Casey McClurkin, a certified Behavioral Financial Advisor, is the owner of Evolve Money Coaching.

# DARE TO DREAM AGAIN

By Deborah Train



Photo by Ella Jardim on Unsplash

**W**hat do you believe about yourself? We often hear it said that we are spiritual beings, but how much faith do you really have in the unseen power of your own understanding to love you and guide you?

For any of us, the challenge is to not focus so much on what happens to us on the outside or what others believe about us, but to recognize how we process experiences -- how we feel -- on the inside. What we truly believe about ourselves and our potential as human beings is often times the thing that holds us back from reaching for our dreams, or even believing that we deserve the dreams we once had. Do you remember those dreams?

We are at a time where research has proven what spiritually minded people have known all along: This truly is an inside journey. To change our perspective and reach for a higher potential means stepping

outside of our comfort zone. It means stretching ourselves beyond the label of alcoholic or addict and understanding that our purpose in life is not just to stay sober, but to go out in the world and serve whatever unique purpose truly brings us joy and fulfillment. This is not a selfish means to an end. When we are happy we lead more productive lives and are able to contribute more to the whole of society. Valuing ourselves implies that we are honoring our spiritual growth and recovery, that we are capable of healthy relations and that we can take responsibility for our emotional and physical well-being. Valuing ourselves means continuing to grow towards our deepest desires and aspirations.

The foundation work, offered in the 12 steps of recovery, has been adopted into mainstream society and appears in many facets of the mental health fields, as well as being reframed by motivational speakers, coaching models and positive psychology. Whichever

route you choose, each teaches us that if we cultivate gratitude and appreciation, no matter what the circumstances of our lives, we can maintain forward momentum. Reinforced with positive affirmations and meditation, we build faith and trust, not only in a power greater than ourselves, but Faith and Trust in ourselves.

In my early years of recovery I suffered with immobilizing anxiety and fear. Meetings and sponsorship provided fellowship and kept me from isolating. Writing a daily gratitude list started building momentum in a positive direction and planted the seeds of hope that would begin to inspire a whole new way of thinking and believing. I started walking, then running, and began to practice breathing exercises, which led to my daily meditation practice. Sometimes we think it needs to be more complicated than it is, but it's the consistency that builds a positive mindset, and despite our prior disbelief, feelings of happiness and

hope begin to replace what was once despair.

I'm still an introvert, but I have learned how to overcome debilitating fear and anxiety. Today, writing a gratitude list and showing up, even when I am afraid, are two things that continue to bring me positive results. It is the consistency and maintenance that matter most. Stop these exercises and the level of gratitude-induced esteem goes down.

Another esteem building exercise, discovered through my coaching practice, is speaking affirmations into the mirror. It may feel awkward at first, but it can be the catalyst for developing a healthier self-image and helps to confront limiting beliefs that are simmering beneath the surface.

I am human and still have some fear, but today, because of these daily practices, I have the freedom to express and explore life with an open heart and mind. My study of the science and my research gives me the knowledge and expertise to coach these principles, but practicing these life-transforming exercises gives me the experience to validate their effectiveness, through the shifts in my own emotional and spiritual well being. It feels good to feel good and that is why I do what I do. I want to share what I have seen work in others and what I have felt work within my own being.

Building up one's self-esteem and self-worth happens when we are able to take action, no matter how small, first towards our healing, and then towards the manifestation of our dreams and goals. The freedom to thrive is a beautiful gift. To move beyond survival and dare to dream again, is divine. 🌈

*Deborah Train is an IFC Certified Professional Coach in Portland. She can be reached at [EverydayInspiredLife@gmail.com](mailto:EverydayInspiredLife@gmail.com)*

**When we are happy we lead more productive lives and are able to contribute more to the whole of society.**



photo courtesy: Robert Mitchell

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# Free yourself FROM THE DIET MENTALITY

By Mary Moskowitz

If you are like most women today –and many men as well–you have tried every diet and fitness fad on the planet in your elusive quest for the perfect body so you can finally live happily ever after. That “inner mean girl” in your head doesn’t hold back either. She is constantly reminding you of all your imperfections, and sabotaging any chance you have of ever feeling content with who you are. We are the queens of comparison and self-judgment. If only we had “her” life, abs, hair... just fill in the blank. We try the latest and greatest fitness and nutrition plan that promises amazing results often based on deprivation – it’s just plain torture. If we just follow their plan we, too, will achieve that amazing “beach bod.” So why isn’t it working?

Believe me, you are not alone. I work with women every day who are in tears because they are stuck. The scale won’t budge, their pants size keeps going up and they feel terrible. They are usually on a cocktail of the latest pharmaceuticals that are making them feel even more frustrated, hopeless and sad. They just want to feel better and get their life back, but have no idea where to start.

## How can one diet work for everyone?

Look around you. Do the people you live and work with look like you? Do they share the same ancestry, genetics, age, gender, health challenges, lifestyles and constitution? The answer is NO. Besides sharing the requisite number of body parts and organs, we are all quite different.

There is no one perfect body type or one way of eating for every body. Your nutritional and exercise needs are specific to you and will change from one year to the next and one season to the other. The body you enjoyed in your 20s will be different than the body you have in your 50s. The food that is best for you and your unique biochemical make up might make another person gain weight and feel depleted and sick. We are too different in so many ways to eat the exact same food and follow the exact exercise regimen as everyone else and expect the same results. A cookie cutter approach also doesn’t consider your personal preferences and lifestyle, which makes these programs hard to maintain.

## Diets don’t work.

Giving up the diet mentality can be scary yet liberating. When we give up dieting we are breaking away from someone else’s rules and regulations and taking back our own voice and life. The fad diets and exercise routines will come and go but what your body knows and is trying to tell you will always be there.

It is time to get the incorrect and misguided messages out of your head. Treat your body with love and respect. Deprivation, calorie counting and starving yourself doesn’t work. It never has and never will.

The answers are simple. Eat real, whole, unprocessed foods and prepare them in a loving, nurturing way, filling your body with the vitamins and minerals you need to flourish and thrive. You deserve to eat well and so does your family.

Start with small steps. Drink more water the first week. Add in extra veggies or a salad the next week. Try a new recipe and experiment with new ingredients. Fill up on the good stuff as you slowly crowd out

It is not selfish to prioritize your own health and happiness—it’s part of your recovery.

the foods that are not serving you well. Find ways to fit more movement into your day and pleasure into your life. Walk on the beach, jump rope with your kids. Run if you enjoy it, skip it if you don’t. It is the small steps that create the big changes

There are times when it is helpful to find a reliable professional who can support you, especially if you are dealing with a chronic health condition or serious disease. I recommend an integrative or functional medical provider who will take the time to search for the underlying cause of your symptoms and disease and not just hand you another prescription. They will collaborate with you on a more personalized plan based a thorough health history and targeted labs and clinical evaluations. Your observations and feedback will guide your healing progress once you are ready to commit to changing what isn’t working and listening to the powerful language your body is speaking.

## Your body deserves the best

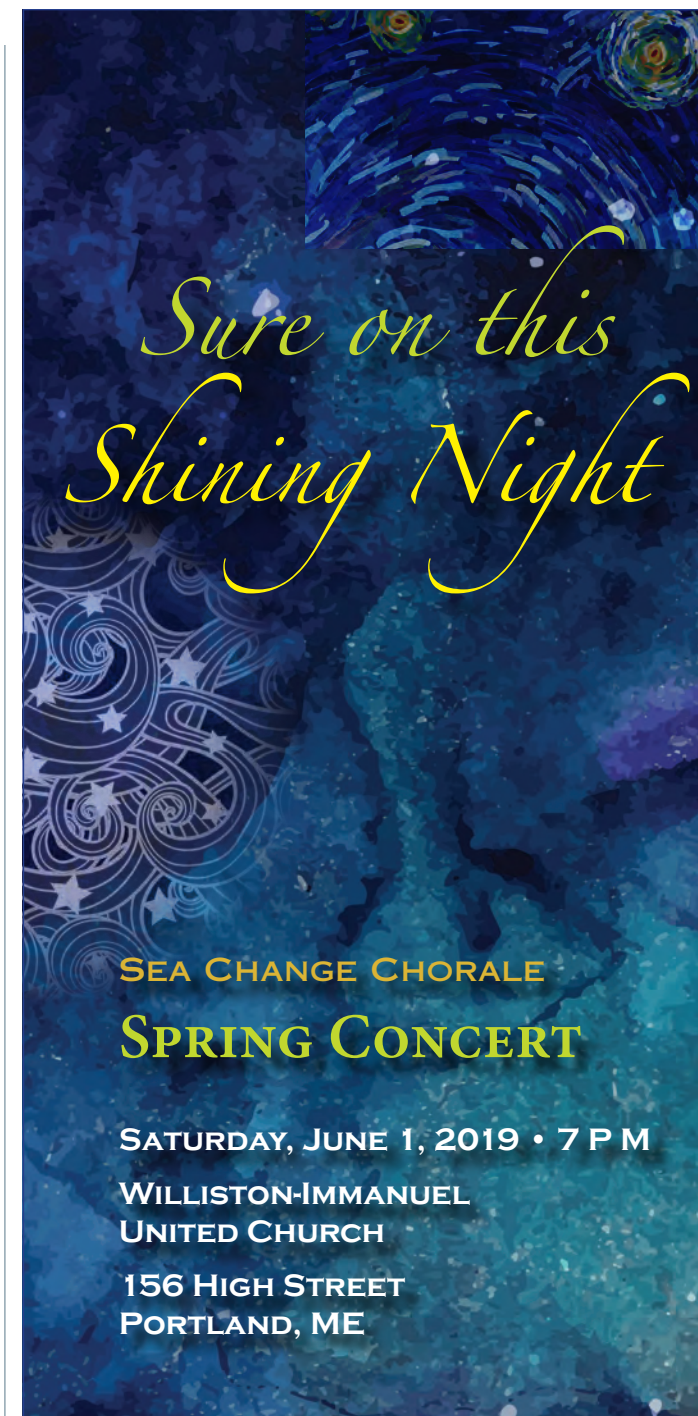
You deserve to feel awesome. It is not selfish to prioritize your own health and happiness – it’s part of your recovery from addiction. The greatest thing you can do for yourself and your family is to take care of yourself so you can be more fully present for yourself and for them. Sleep when you need to sleep. Move in a way that feels right and you enjoy. Eat when you are hungry. Don’t deprive yourself of all you can be and do. Don’t wait until everything is perfect, it never will be perfect for any of us. Don’t waste another day feeling like crap, that is not your destiny.

How would it feel to wake up every day feeling happy, strong, and energized?

What step will you take right now on your journey to better health?



Mary Moskowitz MS CHC is a certified Integrative Health Coach at Mainely Health and Nutrition. She specializes in thyroid, autoimmune disease and digestive disorders.



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# Flex your mental health muscles

By Sarah Kelly

It's just as important to keep in shape mentally as it is physically. When people hear the term mental health, it's natural to think of illness or disorders such as depression, anxiety or bipolarism. However, mental health is much more than illness. Mental health is your overall psychological wellbeing--it's how you think, feel and behave.

The mind and body are connected. The quality of a person's mental health can impact their overall health. Mental health impacts the immune system, heart health and chronic pain. Past studies focused on the negative impact of mental illness on the body, but now data shows that positive thoughts and mental wellness can have a large impact, too. Research published from the Harvard School of Public Health showed that positive psychological wellbeing may actually reduce the risk of heart disease.

Mental health is also directly tied to resilience, which is the ability to overcome adversity. In recovery, we've all overcome and bounced back from a level of despair that seemed hopeless. Your recovery story can be the foundation to apply resilience in other aspects of your life. You already know what it's like to try something different and work toward a solution. You can apply the tools you are learning in recovery to improving your mental health.

## Positive thinking

It's a common misconception that positive thinking means that you

are happy all of the time. Positive thinking is about learning how to build awareness, overcome and bounce back. It does not mean that you never have negative thoughts or feelings, nor does it mean you should ignore those negative thoughts or feelings. Positive thinking is about giving space to feel the emotion, accept it for what it is, and take action to move forward. It is trusting that there is a solution and working toward it.

Your first thought or feeling cannot be controlled; it is a natural human reaction. You can have control of what comes next. It's important to take a moment to pause. As humans, we are actually hardwired to detect threat and negative circumstances for survival. It's instinct. The power of pause is so powerful because it gives us that moment to override instinct and have a choice. You can feed the storyline negatively to create more pain, or you can stop the storyline and go straight to the solution. Learning to pause negative self-talk is the first step toward positive thinking.

## Take care of your body

There is a growing amount of evidence that adequate sleep, a nutritious diet and moving your body will all help improve your mental health. Sleep is vital to good physical and mental health. It's the time where we process our day and restore our brains and our bodies. Inadequate sleep can lead to riskier decisions and poor

outcomes. Adults should get seven to nine hours of sleep per night. The food you eat is your body's fuel. While there is no specific one-size-fits-all diet plan, aim towards a diet with a large variety of vegetables, protein, grains and fruit. It's important to notice how your food is affecting your mood. Start being mindful of how you feel in the moment and over the next 24 hours.

There's an old saying in recovery, "move a muscle, change a thought." Physical exercise is key to good mental health. In addition to the positive hormones that it releases, it directly impacts the brain's ability to process information and remain flexible. Exercise also decreases the symptoms of depression and anxiety. You can also keep your brain flexible with mental exercises. Keep your brain active by reading, doing puzzles, or getting involved in an activity you love. Stimulating your brain helps your overall wellness.

## Reach out for help

If you are struggling with mental illness, it's important to seek help.



For many people in recovery, it is necessary to connect with additional resources outside of recovery programs to work through mental health concerns. Make sure to let other people know what is going on and connect to someone who can help you, like a counselor, therapist, psychiatrist or coach.

It's also important to remember that focusing on positive thinking and mental wellbeing doesn't come always easily. Just like when you start anything new, it takes practice and time to get better at flexing your mental health muscles. 🧘

## Cultivating Positive Thinking

**Practice Affirmations:** Say positive, self-empowering statements daily to yourself holding your hands to heart, like in prayer, as a sign of radical self-acceptance. (Example: I am worthy of love.)

**Gratitude:** Write down three to five things daily that you are grateful for in your life

**Be of service:** Sign-up for volunteer work, give back to your community and/or practice random acts of kindness



*Sarah Kelly, owner of Sarah Kelly Coaching, is a National Board Certified Health & Wellness Coach and Connecticut Community for Addiction Recovery Certified Recovery Coach. She is an active member of the recovery community.*

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# RECOVERY ALLIES

## BUSINESS OWNERS AS Change Agents



dimensions of recovery wellness -- emotional, environmental, financial, intellectual, occupational, physical, social, and spiritual -- and then reach out to people in recovery to provide services.

By Alison Jones Webb

Business owners play a crucial role in creating recovery friendly communities. They can be change agents when it comes to supporting people in recovery and creating opportunities along their journey to wellness. In addition to proactively employing people in recovery, business owners can use their influence in the community to set an example and make recovery visible, which helps to reduce stigma.

There are many touchpoints along the recovery journey where businesses can offer support. Business owners can consider where the services they offer fit into the eight

Business owners can be strong recovery allies in the form of "giving back" to the community through free services to people in recovery, and also in ways that may be beneficial to the business. Here are some examples of how business owners can become involved.

**Consider what your business offers, and then reach out to people in recovery.**

Local credit unions offer information and education to all of their customers, and they can reach out to people in recovery specifically for this service. Town and Country Federal Credit Union in Portland, for example, has worked with the Portland

Recovery Community Center to host workshops at the center on financial management. Workshop participants learned the basics of budgeting, as well as how to improve credit scores and options for consolidating debt into manageable monthly payments. Many credit unions will open accounts for people in recovery (and others) who have a bad credit history and help them on their way to financial wellness.

**Offer recovery-support services for free or on a sliding fee basis.**

Businesses that specialize in self-care and personal growth such as yoga and counseling can create safe spaces for people in recovery to explore their spiritual and emotional lives. In Portland, Sea Change Yoga offers free classes to people in recovery and supports this service through donations. Arcana, a business in Portland, offers yoga and other healing arts on a sliding fee schedule. Similarly, local gyms can open their doors for free to people in recovery, one day a week, for example, as a way to support their journey to physical wellness.

**Participate in events specifically for people in recovery who are seeking employment.**

Last year, ENSO Recovery (a treatment agency) collaborated with the city of Portland and local sheriff's and police departments to hold a Recovery Job Fair at the Portland Expo Center. This event brought together employers and people in recovery to learn about each other and to network. Large employers could partner with agencies that provide treatment and recovery support services to host their own job fair for people in recovery.

Participate in fundraisers. Business owners can support the recovery community by donating goods and services to events designed to celebrate the hope that recovery brings to individuals, families and communities, such as the annual Rally 4 Recovery each year in September and similar events around the state. They can also donate to organizations like recovery community centers.



Alison Jones Webb is a public health professional who has worked in the field of substance use prevention, treatment and recovery in Maine for over 15 years.

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**What has surprised you the most about sober living?**

Coming into Recovery is just the beginning, the life that recovery gives is something I could never have thought up myself (even in my wildest dreams).

**What is your greatest joy today?**

My 9-month-old daughter, Trinity, has never and will never have to see me under the influence of illegal drugs, and that is a beautiful thing. Also, I get to be an advocate and help those who have lost their voice or been silenced begin to speak out again.

**What new hobbies have you explored in Recovery?**

I have become Reiki certified and have been offering healing sessions to folks in Recovery. I also took up aerial yoga, something you could never have convinced me would happen while I was using. I have become a certified doula (birthing assistant) and offer free services to mothers in Recovery. I work in the UMA-Bangor community garden to help to solve the problem of food insecurity in the Bangor area.

**If you could plan a perfect day for yourself, what would it involve?**

A perfect day would include getting up early, having a cup of coffee and then doing my regular daily yoga practice followed by my workout routine. I would then head to the beach with my entire family and enjoy the day in the sun. The one thing that sticks out to me about this question is that a perfect day (and every day for me) includes staying abstinent.

**What tool(s) do you rely on when you're having a bad day?**

If I am having a hard day I reach out to my support system. Being honest about where I am at has

**Kayla Kålel**

**AGE:** 29  
**RESIDENCE:** BANGOR  
**OCCUPATION:** STUDENT  
**TIME IN RECOVERY:** 4 YEARS



Kayla & mom.  
Photo by Brian Delaney


**"I remember thinking that people could never understand what I'm going through. I was wrong."**

proven to be the most important part of having a hard time. I have found that a problem shared out loud, is a problem cut in half. Also, if I need some alone time away from day-to-day responsibilities, I will do something simple for myself, such as go for a walk, do yoga or meditate, get my nails done or go tanning. I also remind myself that nothing is permanent and I shouldn't worry about negative emotions because, like anything, they come and go.

**Name one of your goals for the future.**

Help people who are attempting to come into recovery the same way that people helped me when I first entered this beautiful journey.

**What's one piece of advice you have for someone just starting their journey in Recovery?**

You are not alone. There are thousands of us who have felt as desperate, suicidal, angry, shameful and regretful as you do. I remember thinking that people could never understand what I was going through, I thought I was different. There are millions of Americans in recovery from substance use disorder in this very moment. They are (like me) living lives they never thought possible. There is an entire recovery community that is waiting to compassionately help you on your journey to recovery without any judgement. Also, when I first came into recovery, I truly did not think that I deserved the wonders and beauty that recovery gave. Know there is absolutely nothing you could have done that would ever make you not worthy of the beautiful life that comes with recovery. If you are incapable of self love right now, that's OK. Just keep coming back and let people in recovery love you until you are capable of loving yourself. 



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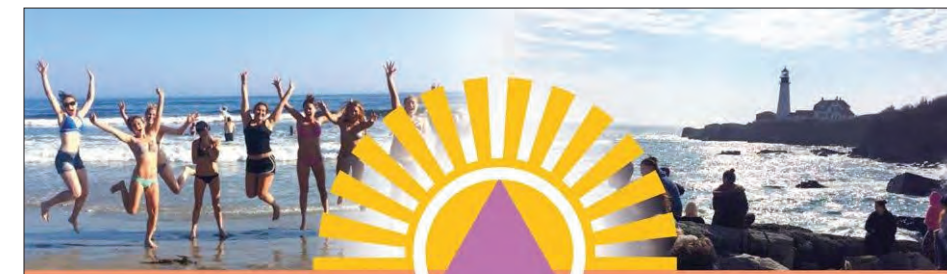
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## PEOPLE LIKE US LIVE LIKE THIS



Jennie Joan Ferrare was on her way to a blackout when a most unusual thing happened: she saw herself drink, as if duplicated by magic, and understood with absolute certainty what would happen next.

The exact circumstances might vary. She might wake up in a hotel room. She might come to with a new tattoo. She might even find herself in a foreign country. But there was a pretty good chance she would endure some form of sexual harassment including, potentially, a full-on assault. “I said, well, I can’t control the drinking, but if I gave up drinking, I wouldn’t be in these situations anymore.”

That moment of clarity led to many more and now Ferrare, 29, is one of the youngest business owners in the Old Port. A yoga teacher by training, she runs Arcana, whose holistic healing services range from yoga to polarity therapy, from Ayurveda to Reiki, and whose lightly scented storefront caters to over 50 customers on a busy day. “We have 10 employees and maybe 25 contractors and then we have consignment artists in the shop...it’s a lot,” she says with a smile.

### JENNIE FERRARE AT ARCANA

By Lara Santoro



Built with the funds and energy of people in recovery, Arcana has become a magnet for those in recovery, many of whom feel a need to supplement 12-step work with the healing services Ferrare provides. Ferrare is busy as general manager, but she runs the yoga school, too, certifying instructors to whom she can offer partial and full scholarships thanks to a local grant she applied for and won.

The teacher trainings are to her the most rewarding part of her venture, now in its third year. The studio in which Ferrare teaches – a softly lit room with the Portland skyline painted in deep violets and indigos on the wall – was built singlehandedly over the course of many months by a heroin addict who volunteered his skills and charged her nothing for them. “I had no money,” says Ferrare, tears welling in her eyes, “He did it all for free and a few months later he died of an overdose. I tried to trade him stuff, I said you can come and do yoga, you can get Reiki for free, and he said, ‘I don’t want anything.’ People who are not in recovery don’t understand the power of what happens. And the heartbreak. He just gave and gave and gave and he couldn’t stay clean. But the energy of him is always in the space to me.”

Ferrare, who was born in the Bangor area, is coming up on five years sober. Her first four years were ones of exceptional turbulence. She got divorced from her original business partner, acquired sole ownership, met a man who was also in recovery, had baby Leo and has operated on little or no sleep for six months now, grabbing a meal here and there whenever she can find a minute to sit down. She has stayed sober through it all.

*Lara Santoro is a writer who lives in Portland.*

## Readers Share

### Conversation With Myself in My Bedroom Mirror

by Emma Chapin

“Listen.” I say to myself  
Looking into my own chocolate brown eyes  
Staring back at me in my bedroom mirror  
“I haven’t always been kind to you.”  
Taking in my hourglass shape, my scars and tattoos  
Noticing the round curve of my stomach and thighs  
“I’m sorry,” I say. “Can we start over?”  
I think of the mantras that have kept me going  
Your body loves you, food is fuel, it gets better  
I cling to these as though they are a rope  
    keeping my feet on earth  
Keeping me from floating away

What else do I need to tell myself?  
Is “I’m sorry” really enough?  
I want to vow to do better  
But can I make myself a promise I’m not sure I can keep?  
Is Wanting to keep the promise enough?  
What does “better” even mean?  
But  
If I don’t fight for my body’s right to exist  
Who will?

I take in the perfect imperfections of my reflection  
And I think to myself, softly,  
And I think to myself, a little louder  
And I whisper to myself, a little louder still  
And my voice quivers but I make myself believe it  
“You are Good.”

*Emma Chapin is a peer at the Recovery Oriented Campus Center at the University of Southern Maine. She is in recovery from an eating disorder.*



# Many Paths

## PRCC Offers Diverse Menu Of Support

By Sarah Siegel



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Staff and volunteers at PRCC. Photo by Brian Delaney

People find recovery through a multitude of different ways and this is a beautiful thing. Just as Mt. Katahdin has many trails that one can take from the base of the mountain to the snow covered peak, there are many paths that can lead us from the darkness of active addiction to the deeply meaningful and joyful experience of lasting recovery. In the same way that no one trail on Mt Katahdin is fundamentally better or worse than another (just different!), there is no path of recovery that is inherently better or worse than another. We each have certain unique needs, experiences and stories. We all have our own

preferences. What a gift this is! If we were the same, life would be horribly boring, don't you think? We are living in an exciting time, when there are more and more doorways to recovery opening for those seeking healing.

The Portland Recovery Community Center is a shining example of the many paths to recovery, with diverse offerings of over 50 meetings and activities a week and over 125 people coming through their door daily.

The PRCC, at 468 Forest Ave., is open seven days a week. While the front of the building may be subdued, the inside is full of life.

On one recent evening there were multiple meetings and groups that included the arts of some kind (the Artist's Way, a poetry reading and others). The simple, inviting space was filled with piano music as people connected in the front lounge area and laughter bubbled up from around the corner.

Like the center, Executive Director Leslie Clark is warm and has an inviting energy. "When somebody walks into [PRCC], they can feel completely accepted for where they are," Clark says.

Clark has been in recovery since 1989. Her recovery is grounded in the 12 steps and other spiritual and health pathways. With a background in nonprofit leadership and former CEO at Greater Portland Health, she was hired almost two years ago as the executive director for the PRCC, where she devotes herself full time to supporting people healing from Addiction and to smashing the stigma related to it. Smiling, Clark said she doesn't think she would have "gotten well" without "a lot of different things" to support her recovery and that the beauty of the PRCC is "that we support the whole person and let them find their way."

The offerings at PRCC include support groups that are based on the 12 Steps --Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, Cocaine Anonymous -- as well

as those that are not -- SMART Recovery, Refuge Recovery, H.O.P.E., among others. The center hosts multiple social events like Open Mic Night, Movie Nights, dances, monthly Kirtan (music and chanting) and more. Included in the monthly activities are holistic offerings such as yoga, Reiki, meditation, music, art and tai chi.

Alongside the meetings and activities, PRCC offers peer-based recovery support in the form of Recovery Coaching and telephone recovery calls. Both are widely popular. Recovery Coaches work within the center's walls and out in the larger community. More than 100 people have signed up to receive calls from volunteers every week and that number is growing.

In conjunction with its many support groups, activities and peer coaching offerings, the center is also involved with advocacy work to break down the barriers to recovery that so many of us experience in the form of the shame and stigma surrounding addiction.

At the PRCC, all groups and activities are FREE! All are initiated, formed and led by volunteer members; there are few paid staff members. This important aspect

of makes PRCC what it is: an accessible recovery center for the community and by the community. It was the first of its kind in Maine, but seven new Recovery Community Centers have opened in Caribou, Machias, Houlton, Calais, Boothbay, Bridgton and Bath. The Portland branch will be the "hub" for each of them.

People are finding more and more that recovery is an intensely personal journey, and there are no "right" or "wrong" ways to recover, only ways that either work or do not work for each of us. We are fortunate to live in a time and place where we can find recovery, and a community that supports it, along with inclusivity and acceptance. The Portland Recovery Community Center is an invaluable resource to those healing from addiction. By finding the tools that work for us and showing up to the process to the best of our ability, we can heal far more extensively than many of us may have ever thought possible.



Sarah Siegel of Freeport is an ordained interfaith minister, Mindfulness Meditation coach and writer.



PRCC is located at 468 Forest Ave. in Portland. Photo by Brian Delaney



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It's easy to find what you're looking for at PRCC. Photo by Brian Delaney

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# the link between spirituality and health

By Kimble Green

**YOU ARE ENOUGH.  
YOU ARE WORTHY.  
YOU ARE NOT BROKEN!**

So, what does it mean when we get stuck in unwanted patterns like addiction, emotional struggles, mental anguish, or physical illness? It simply means you are out of alignment with your true nature. It doesn't mean you are somehow broken. Struggles and unwanted behaviors are often coping mechanisms as well as signs to point us in the direction we want to go.

You have the inner tools to get back on your path – the path of your choosing. The good news is you already have within you the ability to shift those unwanted patterns or habits. There's no need to become someone else, learn new skills or change who you are at your core. You are enough and you have the power within you to return to your natural state of balance and wellbeing.

You are designed for health and wellbeing. Your health and your spirit are vitally linked. We are dual beings; body and soul, physical and nonphysical. Your body is the vehicle your spirit or soul uses to experience life on earth. You are one whole interconnected being – mind, body, emotions and spirit. You are wise and you have within you the ability to create the change you desire.

Society has taught us to rely on our accomplishments and other external experiences to determine our state of being – mind, body and emotions – that's living from the outside-in. Living from the outside-in forces us to try and control people, circumstances and things in our lives. That approach doesn't work for long and it's exhausting – as you know, it takes a toll. You are your most powerful when

you live from the inside-out. Use the tools and abilities you have within you right now – intuition, wisdom, knowing, intelligence, creativity and imagination – to create the change(s) you want. These are the everlasting sources

within you that will propel you toward your goals and dreams.

So, how do you access those inner capacities, how do you shift from living outside-in to inside-out? It's easier and quicker than you think. Because your natural state is geared toward wellbeing, the tools needed to rebalance your body, mind, and emotions are not only

within you but eager to be used to serve you and your health and happiness. You are enough, You are health, You are worthy, You are love and You are success.

Begin turning your life inside-out by:

## LOOKING IN...

and breathe – that's right, simply breathe. Even if it's just for 2 minutes each morning, breathe deeply and locate your center... that place within YOU which is the very core of your being.

## LOOKING OUT...

be present – all of your power is in the present! So, take one day at a time throughout and observe each moment without judgment – you are likely to discover remarkable things.

## LOOKING AT...

yourself with loving compassion. Always remember that your true nature is wired for balance, wellbeing, love and achievement.

## LOOKING UP...

have faith that you are loved. The Universe desires for You success and joy as you journey through this earth school.

Ultimately, you are these mantras:

**I AM ENOUGH,  
I AM WORTHY,  
I AM LOVE**



Kimble Greene, Ph.D. is an author, life strategist and intuitive who has been serving individuals, groups, organizations and communities for over 33 years. You can contact her at [support@drkimblegreene.com](mailto:support@drkimblegreene.com); learn more at: [www.drkimblegreene.com](http://www.drkimblegreene.com) or [www.themonarchmethod.com](http://www.themonarchmethod.com).

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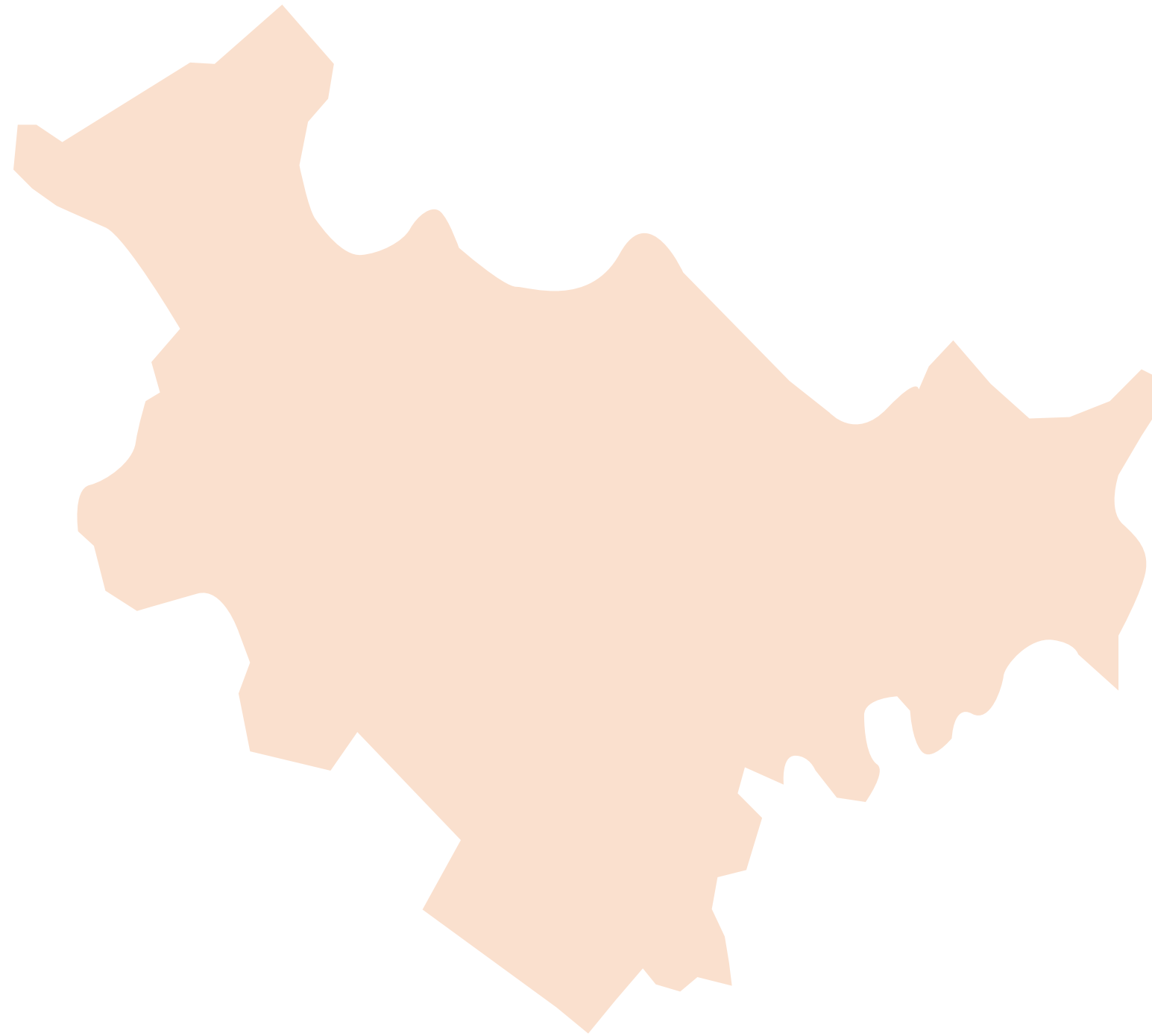
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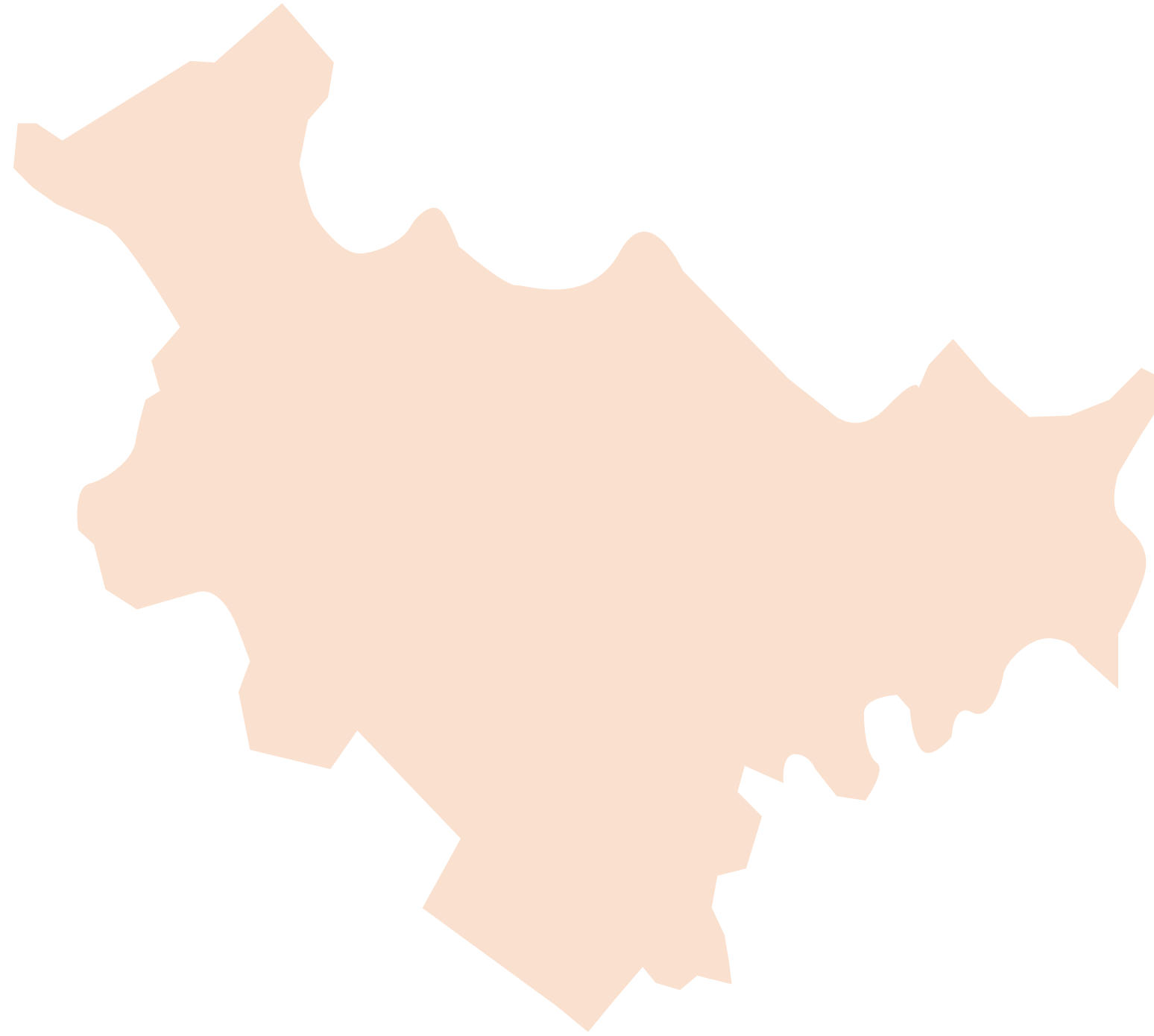
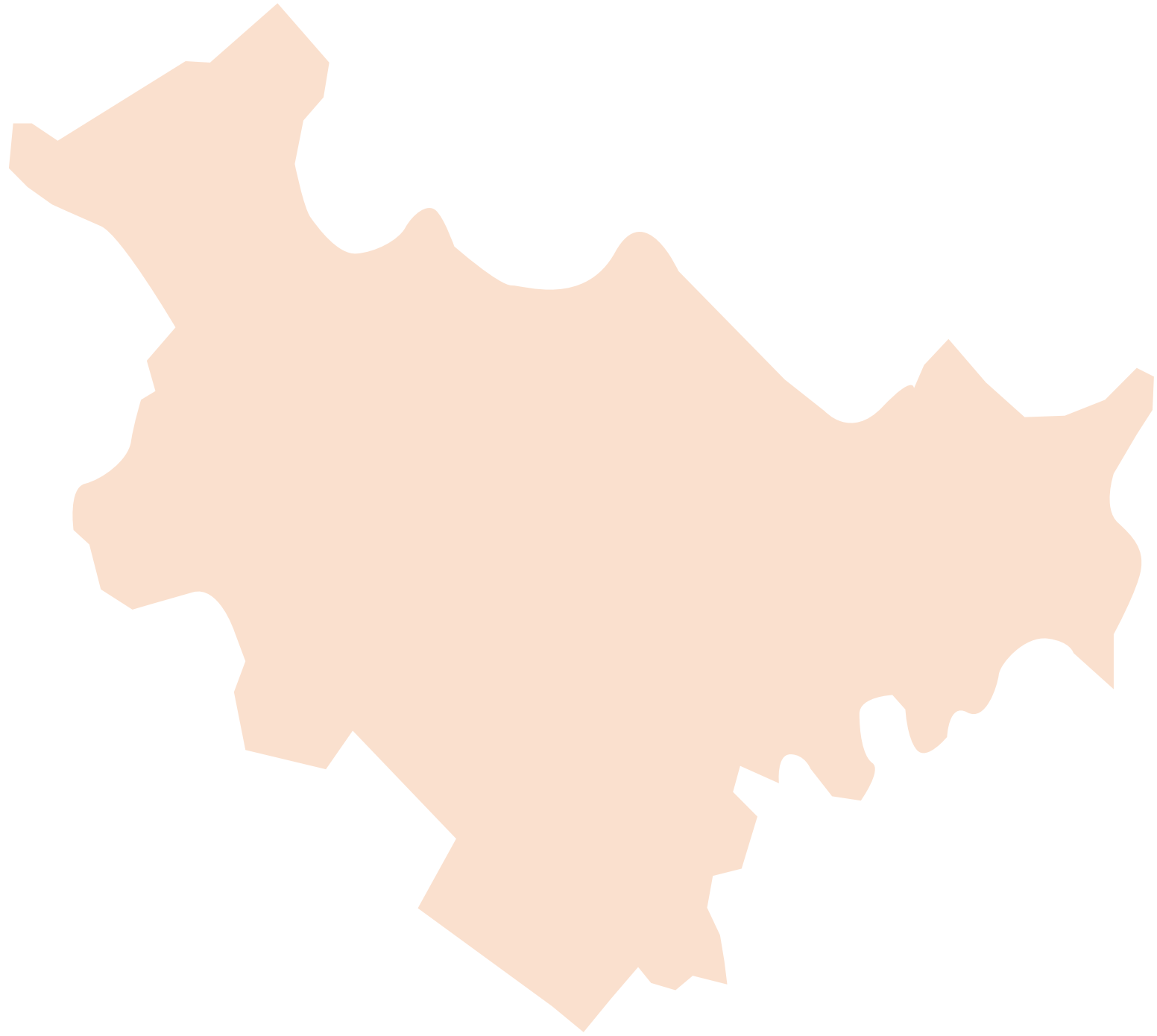
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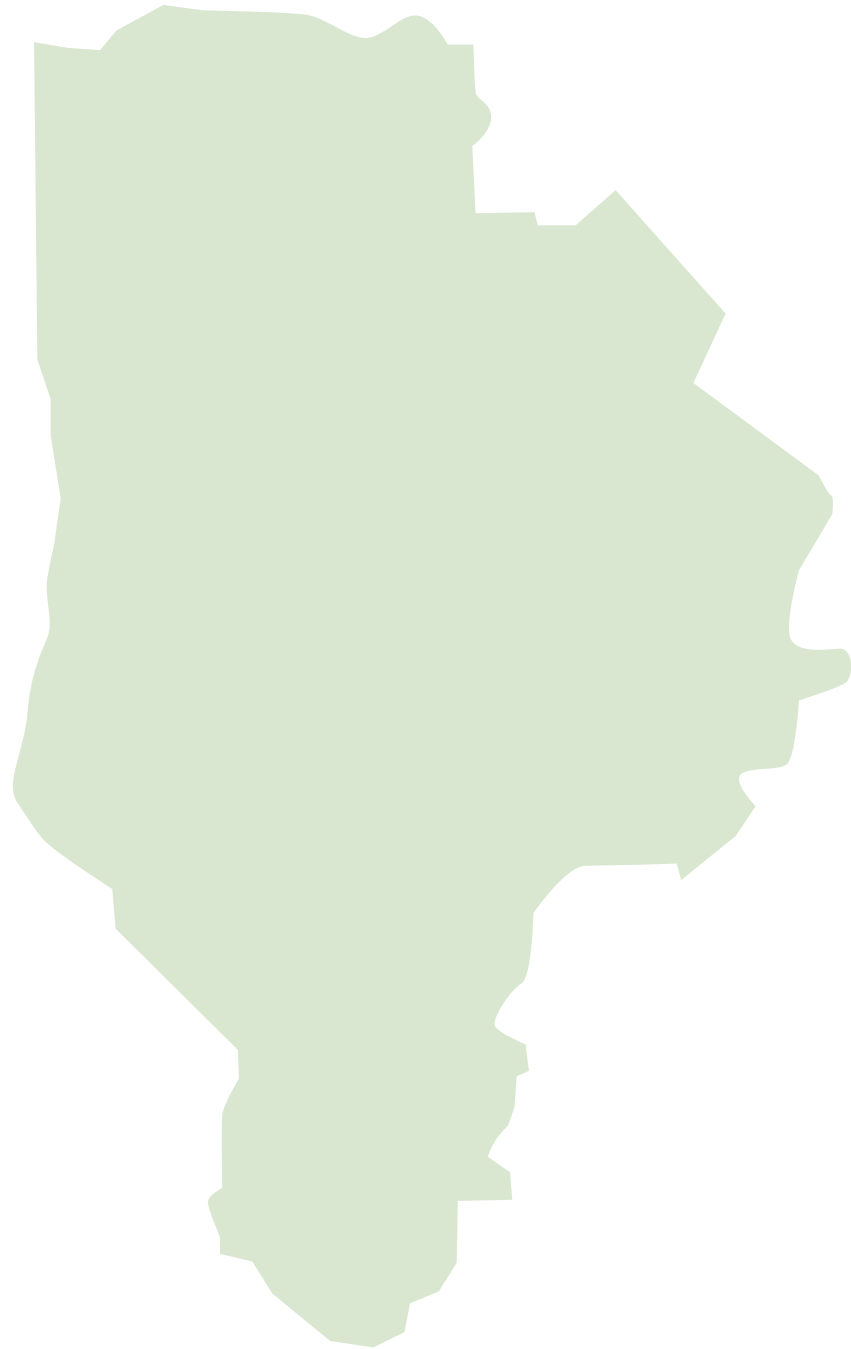
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