

# Recovery



## connection Winter

### Holiday Greetings!

*Wishing you a very Merry Christmas and  
A Happy New Year from all of us at  
Cedars!*

The Holiday Season is emotionally charged for everyone and for those of you who are new in recovery, it can be especially challenging. This is really a great time of year to reap the best that "Fellowship" has to offer, I have a lot of friends in recovery who struggled through the season in early recovery (although the lack of family fights and impaired driving charges was a distinct relief) and now find that this is the season where they feel especially united in the Spirituality of recovery.

I know there are a lot of us that are facing challenges right now, health problems, the loss of family and friends and the uncertainty of early recovery . Please join me in celebrating this season and giving thanks for the gift of each other and of recovery.

In Fellowship  
Neal



### A Message From Discovery

Hello to all of you from Rio and I, Amanda, Gillian and Joe and all the folks at Cedars who support the Discovery Program.

Il think that Neal puts it best when he says that you are what Cedars is about and without you this wonderful place wouldn't be here. I am grateful to have met you and believe that I learn as much from you as I hope you have from us. Your courage and strength in battling the disease of addiction is amazing and I feel honored to have been part of your recovery journeys.

I wish you all the very best that Christmas can offer and hope that 2010 brings you health, happiness and peace.

Merry Christmas!  
Geoff

# Winter

## Sobriety Through

## The Holidays:

### *Beating The Holiday Blues*

Most people know the holidays can be a period of emotional highs and lows. Loneliness, anxiety, happiness and sadness are common feelings, sometimes experienced in startling succession. The bad news is the holiday blues can trigger relapse for people recovering from alcoholism and other drug addiction. The good news is the blues can be remedied by planning ahead.

Why do the blues hit during this otherwise festive season? Doing too much or too little and being separated from loved ones at this special time can lead to sadness during the holiday season. Many recovering people associate the holidays with memories of overindulgence, perhaps of big benders that resulted in relationship problems or great personal losses.

Whether you're in recovery or not, developing a holiday plan to help prevent the blues, one that will confront unpleasant memories before they threaten your holiday experience. Your plan should include improved self-care, enhanced support from others, and healthy ways to celebrate. Here are a few suggestions to achieve a happy, sober holiday season:

**Good self-care is vital.** Remember to slow down. Take some quiet time each day and work on an attitude of gratitude. Plan relaxation and meditation into your day, even for a few minutes, no matter how busy you are. Relax your standards and reduce overwhelming demands and responsibilities.

**Don't overindulge.** Go easy on the holiday sweets and follow a balanced diet. Monitor your intake of caffeine, nicotine and sugar. Exercise regularly to help maintain your energy level amid a busier schedule. Don't try to do too much. Get plenty of sleep. Fatigue is a stressor. Maintain some kind of schedule and plan ahead; don't wait until the last minute to purchase gifts or prepare to entertain.

**Enhance your support system.** Holidays are a good time to reach out more frequently to your therapist, sponsor, spiritual advisor, or support group. If you're in recovery, spend time with fellow recovering people. Let others help you realize your personal limits. Set healthy boundaries and learn to say "no" in a way that is comfortable for you.

**Find new ways to celebrate.** Create some new symbols and rituals that will help redefine a joyful holiday season. You might host a holiday gathering for special recovering friends and/or attend celebrations of your Twelve Step group. Avoid isolation and spend time with people you like who are not substance users. Don't expose yourself to unnecessary temptations, such as gatherings where alcohol is the center of entertainment. If there are people who have a negative influence on you, avoid them.

**Focus on your recovery program.** Holidays are also an important time to focus on your recovery program. For example, ask, "What am I working on in my program now?" Discuss this with your sponsor.

**Release your resentments.** Resentments are described as allowing a person you dislike to live in your head, rent-free. Resentments that gain steam during the holidays can be disastrous for anyone, especially recovering people. The Big Book refers to resentment as the No. 1 offender, or the most common factor in failed sobriety.

Holidays may also be a time to evaluate your spirituality and find a personal way to draw support from the spirit of the season. Return the holidays to a spiritual base, and stress the power of unselfish giving.

Recovery is serious work, but it is also important to have fun. Laugh a little and a little more. Start seeing the humor in those things that annoy you. Take from the holiday season what is important for you and leave the rest.

*Content provided by hazelden.org*



## An Act Of Surrender:

*A new book promises there is hope to find happiness, joyfulness, and freedom in recovery*

Jim Stimson is a frequent visitor here at Cedars - he is well-known by many of our alumni and is also a good friend of many of our staff members. In fact, he and Neal Berger have worked together for many years going back to the early 1980's when Jim was the director of MacMillan Bloedel's, and later Weyerhaeuser's, Employee and Family Assistance Program. During the last 10 years, the two have implemented a workplace substance abuse education program called the Courage to Care for a number of worksites in BC and Alberta.

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# 2009

Jim, along with a colleague of his, Nancy Lee, have recently published a book on addiction and recovery titled: *An Act of Surrender, Recover from Alcohol and Drug Addiction and Be Happy, Joyous, and Free*. We interviewed Jim for this issue of Connection, to learn more about the book.

***It is an honor for us at Cedars to share your message of recovery through this book. Why did you decide to write a book on addiction and recovery?***

This was something that friends, including my co-writer/editor Nancy, encouraged me to do. I never saw myself as an author. But I have to say when the idea was suggested to me, I did see it as a way to bring hope to greater number of people than I could through my regular work doing addiction training and interventions.

***Is that the main message of the book - that there is hope for addicts?***

Yes, I believe there is always hope addicts can find recovery, providing that they are prepared to make a commitment to working on healing their personal and spiritual self and sticking with it. There is also hope for the families who have been wounded by their loved ones' addiction, again, providing they are prepared to do what it is going to take, which we talk about in the book.

***What is the meaning behind the title "An Act of Surrender"?***

Surrendering in recovery means we admit our powerlessness over our addiction and we give ourselves over to a higher power. Some people call that God, but if someone can't work with the idea of God, then they can think of it as a "group of drunks or druggies." The point is that an addict needs to be open to receiving guidance from something greater than they are, just as their addiction was greater than them. That's why in recovery we will talk about the fact that god could be a group of drunks or druggies because they can provide the support and encouragement the addict needs. But for me personally, I do feel that what has worked for me, and continues to work for me, is the idea of surrendering to HP - to a Higher Power, or we also use the term Higher Presence. So yes, the road to recovery starts with that first act of surrender, but it is also an ongoing process of surrendering our ego and placing our trust in HP as we encounter challenges in life.

***Is the book based on 12-step philosophy?***

We talk a lot in the book about doing the work of recovery by working the steps, and participating in the fellowship of recovery meetings. As a professional who has been working with addicts for 35 years - my entire career - I know the value of 12-step programs. It is the best process I know of to help people find and maintain their recovery. I'd like to think the book will help people deepen their recovery by becoming aware of what I would call spiritual principles for recovery. These are virtues and values that can help people work through and overcome their character defects.

***So the book builds on 12-step philosophy but then takes people beyond that?***

I think so. I've found that there are just so many people who think all they need to do is quit drinking or using, do their time in a treatment centre, and show up at a meeting now and again and all will be well. And maybe it will be. But what I've learned over the years through my own recovery, and through working with numerous clients, is that if you seriously work on your personal and spiritual growth, life truly can become happy, joyous, and free - a place that I don't think a person can get to without doing the work, and I'm not just talking about people in recovery.

***Is the book just for those in recovery or is it also for families?***

Addiction is a family disease and we talk a lot about the role of the family in the book. Families need to know how to support their loved one in recovery, and they also need to know how to heal their own wounds. So the book is definitely for family members as well.

***Do you talk about your own recovery in the book?***

I do tell a lot of personal stories of what it was like growing up with an alcoholic father, and my own experiences of drinking and using, and working on my recovery for the past 37 years. But it is definitely not a memoir as such. I tell stories of many of others I've worked with (all names were changed) over the years. Most of the book is really me wearing my hat as a professional talking about what works and what doesn't work when it comes to recovery. That's why I choose to disclose my full name as the author - I'm not writing it from the perspective of someone in a 12-step program, I'm

writing it as someone who has worked in the field, and who also has had a lot of personal experiences.

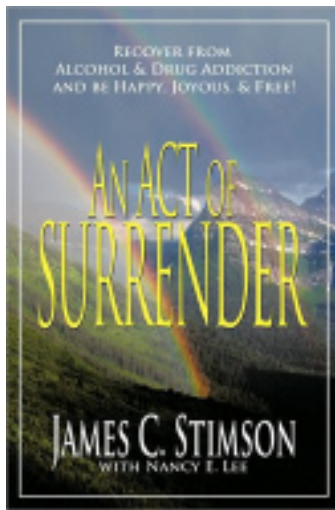
***In addition to the book, you've also put together a set of cards for people in recovery. What are these all about?***

We talk a lot in the book about virtues and values and spiritual principles that can really make a difference to one's life in recovery. Nancy and I just thought it would be helpful to focus in on those principles and create a set of contemplative cards that people could use as a tool to help deepen their recovery.

***Where can people learn more about you and your work?***

We have a website at [www.actofsurrender.com](http://www.actofsurrender.com) where people can sign up for a free weekly e-newsletter that discusses these spiritual principles for recovery in much more detail. Folks can also buy the book and cards on the site.

***Note: The "An Act of Surrender" Book & cards are available for purchase at Cedars.***



# Calendar

## Of Events



P.O. Box 250.  
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FOR MORE INFORMATION  
ABOUT OUR PROGRAMS &  
SERVICES OR FOR GENERAL  
INQUIRIES PLEASE CALL:

**Toll Free: 1-866-716-2006**

[www.cedarscobblehill.com](http://www.cedarscobblehill.com)

[info@cedarscobblehill.com](mailto:info@cedarscobblehill.com)

### SUNDAY, JAN 10TH

Discovery Family Program  
*Please call to register*

Discovery Center

### THURSDAY, JAN 28TH

Alumni Night

AA Meeting  
Clean Time Ceremony

7PM

Lecture Hall

### SATURDAY, MARCH 13TH

Cedars 4 Year Anniversary  
AA Meeting  
Clean Time Ceremony  
Lunch

10AM

Lecture Hall

### THURSDAY, APRIL 29TH

Alumni Night  
AA Meeting  
Clean Time Ceremony

7PM

Lecture Hall

### THURSDAY, MAY 27TH

Alumni Night  
AA Meeting  
Clean Time Ceremony

7PM

Lecture Hall

### SATURDAY, JULY 17TH

Cedars Annual BBQ  
Al-Anon Meeting  
AA Meeting  
Clean Time Ceremony &  
Cedars Update  
BBQ & Refreshments

10AM

10AM

11:15

12:30

Discovery Center  
Lecture Hall  
Lecture Hall

Main Grounds