

# Together AZ

Inspiring Success On The Road To Recovery

V.1 — No. 4 — January 2010



## When is Enough, Enough?

Dr. Dina Evan



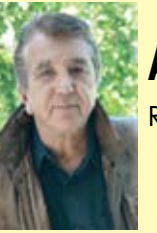
## How to Begin

Alan Cohen



## Spiritual or Stressed? It's a Choice

Bobbe McGinley



## A New, New Year

Rev. Leo Booth

# Beginning a New Journey in 2010

By KRISTEN POLIN

VP, Agency Development Community Bridges, Inc.

If you had told Lisa and her parents 10 years ago that her life would be slammed by a drug addiction so bad that it would come close to taking her life, they could never even imagine that story playing out. Not to her, not to their family. "It was a bottom beyond my own recognition. It is still impossible to comprehend how I got to this place when I think about it long enough."

Recovering from a near fatal drug overdose in late September, Lisa is taking baby steps back to starting her life anew. Now 23 years old, Lisa is a recovering opiate addict participating in the Journey Outpatient program in Gilbert, Arizona. This new Community Bridges program opened in September 2009 to offer outpatient medical detoxification, intensive outpatient, psychiatric services, substance abuse and mental health services, and family support.

Journey recently opened its doors to provide a niche service for young adults (18-30) struggling with addictions to opiates. Staying true to our mission and carefully responding to community needs, Journey became a reality.

### Lisa's Side of the Story

Lisa: For starter's, the name of the program got my attention; *Journey- A New Beginning*. That was certainly what I needed since I knew if I kept living the way I was living, my heart would eventually stop. I felt the darkness, I felt the hopelessness, and I felt incredible pain. These are three things I never planned for in life, but drugs write a different script. My life slipped off a track of promises I made to myself when I was a young teen. I had dreams and goals to go to college, be a teacher, have a family and live a simple life.

I destroyed that simple life when I began drinking and smoking marijuana with friends. I was no longer focused on my future and I was living in the moment of each high. Those highs made me feel invincible and perfect...like I could do no wrong. For years, I kept myself together still doing well in school and living a normal life. But my use became more intense and I had to take a lot more to get by.

Two years went by and I quickly spun out of control. I was probably 17 when I started experimenting with harder drugs like prescription pills and that moment in time had a lasting impact on what the future began to hold for me. I was slowly wrapping myself up in an intense addiction too far gone to just fix and make it go away. I remember being in a room full of strangers, getting high and feeling my heart pound so hard from the confusions



and fear. I know it was then that I realized I was trapped.

### The scary next step in the progression

When I got stuck on the pills, they were my crutch to get through the day. I would notice that I had to take more and more to feel okay and when I did not have them, I would get horribly sick for days. Just saying the word "Heroin" sounds crazy to me. But things got crazy enough that Heroin was my next option. I could no longer afford to keep my habit with pills and this was a cheaper option. I would never have even imagined that I would spend my days and nights injecting this drug to keep myself functioning. In the end, I lost my job, my friends due to my isolation, and I never wanted my parents to see me like this so I was always "busy".

I think a lot of people (mostly me) are still shocked at the thought of me being a Heroin addict. I think I probably looked like the poster child in a drug prevention ad- Warning! Drug addiction is an equal opportunity affliction. Then slap my face on that picture and it's an every day person staring right back at you.

### A new year, a new me

So where am I headed in 2010? Most important, I will stay sober and I want to live. I know that I need to stay in the program and walk the path I am being guided down by some very important people at Community Bridges. I am participating in the intensive outpatient program and I am also receiving medication services to help me through this transition. I feel so blessed to have good people around me going through similar things. I respect my counselor's and the Peer Supports that are helping me through this.

I am learning to take each day and realize that no one is in charge of my happiness, but me. A big "ah ha" moment I had in group not too long ago is that this whole new life I am rebuilding is a miracle...so now I believe in miracles. I also believe that the best is yet to come. My new mantra...Life isn't tied with a bow, but it's still a gift.

### Shedding light on this epidemic

Lisa is a perfect example of the progression from early onset drug abuse to a severe

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addiction to Heroin. When we asked her at what age she began experimenting, she responded that most of it began in the 8th grade. In 10 quick years she walked the path from experimentation to drug addiction. She was an ideal candidate to interview since many of the young adults we see coming in to the program today, began using drugs years before they seek help.

Prescription pills and opiate drugs continue to stay in media headlines as an alarming trend. All of the recent data supports the need for dramatic changes to how we approach this issue and educate the community at large. The Arizona Youth Survey was recently released by the Arizona Criminal Justice Commission in 2009. Though substance use decreased for most drug types from 2006 (marijuana, cigarettes, inhalants and alcohol), prescription drug use increased in all grades. Those reporting use of prescription drugs anytime in their lives was 22.4 percent and 10.7 percent reported having used prescription drugs in the past 30 days.

You can stay connected to trends through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) or through our website to learn more about local resources, obtain educational materials, or simply learn the facts. Start at [www.CommunityBridgesAZ.org](http://www.CommunityBridgesAZ.org) to learn more.

*Journey continued page 12*

## Start the New Year with a Consciousness Cleanse

New 21 Day Breakthrough Program Provides a Detox Diet for the Soul



Most New Year's Resolutions we make in 2010 will focus on the physical or financial aspects of our lives; a new diet or exercise regime, a new job, more money, a better relationship...

Now for the first time ever a radical new program offers a detoxification diet for your heart, mind and soul. In her new book,

**THE 21 DAY CONSCIOUSNESS CLEANSE** A Breakthrough Program for Connecting with Your Soul's Deepest Purpose (Harper One), NY Times best-selling author and prominent transformational life coach Debbie Ford offers a practical three week program that promises to permanently, and positively alter the quality and direction of your life.

According to Ford, "Most New Year's Resolutions don't work because if we don't cleanse out the toxic emotions and experiences from our past and get honest about the present we will be stuck with the same old thoughts, patterns and regrets and end up with the same results." Ford shares that the "noise" in our minds—guilt, doubt, fear, shame, insecurity, and heaviness of the past we carry around with

*21 Day Cleanse continued page 4*

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*Beginning A New Journey from page 1*

### How Community Bridges can help

Community Bridges operates numerous licensed behavioral health outpatient clinics throughout the state of Arizona. Our programs are all co-occurring enhanced and can either be utilized as a step down from a higher level of care, such as medical detoxification, or the primary source of treatment.

Our programs utilize nationally recognized best practice modalities as a standard basis for all of our treatment. At our Journey facility in Gilbert and at the Center for Excellence in Phoenix, we now offer medically monitored ambulatory detoxification using Buprenorphine or Naltrexone combined with intensive outpatient treatment.

Medication-assisted treatment includes the use of medication along with counseling and other support. If a person is addicted, medication allows him or her to regain a normal state of mind, free of drug-induced highs and lows. It frees the person from thinking all the time about the drug. It can reduce the problems of withdrawal and craving. These changes can give the person a chance to focus on the lifestyle changes that can lead back to healthy living (SAMHSA, 2009).

### How the program works at Journey

The young adult opioid specific treatment focuses on engaging young men and women who are either coming out of an inpatient detoxification facility or in lieu of inpatient treatment. Special attention is paid to engaging families as active participants in the program.

When individuals make initial contact with our program, our staff will set up an intake appointment to meet with a clinical assessor. At that time, a comprehensive screening and assessment is conducted to determine the most appropriate level of care. Individuals will also meet with one of our Peer Support Specialists and attend group before they begin the process of determining whether or not medication assisted treatment is the right

fit. Our doctors and clinical team will develop a comprehensive treatment plan that will determine length of treatment, family support services, group and individual counseling and other mental health services.

## ADDICTION WHAT'S TRUE— WHAT'S NOT

### Addiction is a disease.

It cannot be cured, but it can be treated with medication, counseling, and support from family and friends. Addiction is NOT a sign of weakness. It is not true that all anybody needs to kick addiction is to "be strong."

The goal of medication-assisted treatment is to recover from addiction. It does NOT replace one addictive drug with another. It provides a safe, controlled level of medication to overcome the use of a problem opioid.

### Recovery is possible.

But it takes work. After treatment is finished, everything is NOT automatically fine again. Recovery takes commitment every day, through treatment and beyond.

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