

PUBLISHER'S PONDERINGS

By Lisa Browning

I think sometimes I am my own worst enemy! Whatever I do, it's never enough. And that's not a message from anyone else. It's a message to myself. That annoying little inner critic, that constantly chatters and challenges my self-confidence.

I know where it comes from, of course. The messages we receive as young children are so very powerful. The four messages I received from my mother were:

1. You are not on this earth to be happy.
2. Whatever can go wrong, will go wrong.
3. You're going to cry before you go to sleep.
4. Don't expect anything, then you won't be disappointed.

Wow. For quite some time, I held deep resentment towards my mother for instilling these disempowering and fear-based beliefs in me. But I had an energy healing session with the amazing Atherton Drenth last week, and she told me that my mother hated her life. Strong words, I know, but I get it. My mother was given a choice ... (singing and dancing) career, or marriage. She chose marriage. And she regretted it. I don't think she regretted having a husband and children, but I do believe that she lost part of her soul when she made that choice.

And so now, I view those four messages with a new understanding. They are, of course, false. But knowing the context in which they were developed has strengthened my resolve to replace them with the truth.

1. You are on this earth to be happy.
2. All things will turn out for the best.
3. You're going to sing, dance, laugh ... before you go to sleep.
4. Expect it all, and you can make your dreams come true.

I also vow to monitor my self-talk, and make sure that all messages are positive ones. A Christmas gift to myself!! I wish the same for all of you.

Empowering Mental Wellness Through the Development of a Limitless Mindset

A lifetime quest to finding the key to my mental wellness

By [Klaude Walters](#)

Ever since I was born, I have always felt different than most. My mind was in a constant state of chaos and noise with thoughts racing across my mind as if in a mental race against each other to gain my attention. My childhood had been one that occupied family toxicity at levels that could make the sturdiest of systems weak at the knees. The layering of conditioning that took place during those early formative years filled my heart with fears and my mind with ideations I could not understand most of the time. I often felt like I was standing over the edge of a precipice where I could easily tumble into at any time. I was a nervous child, a sensitive soul, a creative that lead my mother to a psychologist at an early age wondering where those “deep thoughts” I was having were coming from. She was worried I might have “mental issues”.

My early childhood was riddled with violent episodes caused by my father’s alcoholism and drug addiction. There was abuse veiled in complicity and denial which did nothing for me but reenforce my inner fears that not much could be controlled in the life of a child and that when the ones who are titled to be caretakers suddenly become your perpetrators, it does something to your psyche that often takes a lifetime to replace into correct perspective. The mind of a child is like a sponge that absorbs not only the words spoken but also the touch, the smells and all that is visual and stores them away into neat little files in their tiny little minds for safe keeping and unravelling at a later date.

Whether we understand it or not, whether we are conscious of it or not, we begin to imprint every single sensation, perception, visual and spoken cues as well as reinforced behaviours as soon as we make our way out of our mother’s womb. Surroundings, events, and people begin to build our outer layers. As we grow, those layers thicken and multiply with every person we encounter and every experience we have. Those layers, with time, begin to weigh us down. They start isolating us from ourselves...till one day, we wake up and feel completely disconnected from the world we believe we belonged to.

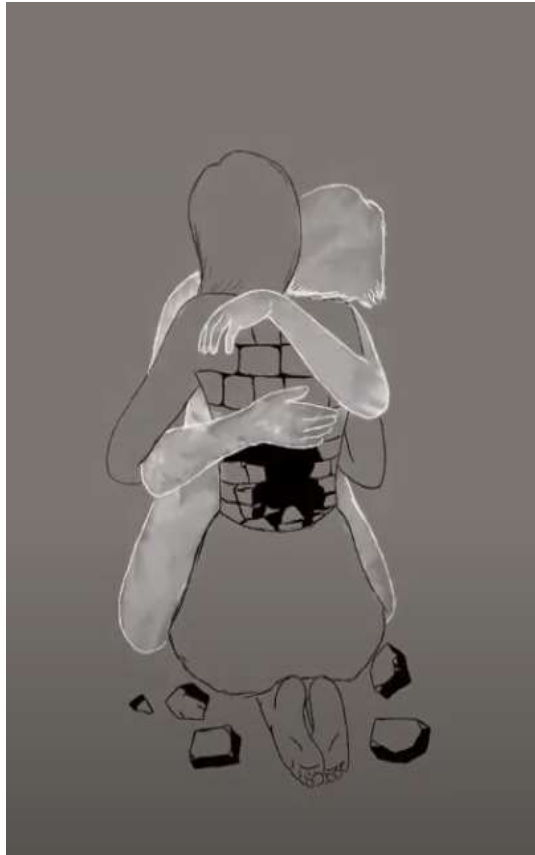
I have been on a lifetime quest to discover what it was that made me feel so disconnected from myself and from the world around me. I felt I did not belong anywhere and with anyone. The land was foreign and so were its occupants. I played the role assigned to me depending on who’s presence I was in. Each



person in my life had different expectations of me and being the people pleaser that I was, I refused to rock the boat and disappoint and therefore learned to quickly assess other's projections of me and acquiesce to their beliefs of who they thought I should be in their play of the moment. Doing so only created more chaos in my mind and made me feel not only disconnected to my surroundings but even more so to myself. I became fragmented.

Until I lost my brother to suicide.

That one event rocked my core to such a depth that it rendered me completely devoid of the desire to live.



I had been plagued my entire life with a feeling of disconnectedness and ideations of disappearing but suicide was a distant thought that would transverse my mind only on occasions where my outer world became so chaotic that it filled me with the fear I had no control.

From the moment I realized my brother was gone, as I lay on the hospital gurney next to his frozen body, suicidal thoughts took permanent residence inside my mind. The pain was just too much to bear. I could not fathom a world without him in it. He was my lifeline, my buoy, my silver thread in this world. Without him, how could I even exist?

From that moment, I felt everything. This newfound intensity was something that had been completely foreign to me until then. I had lived most of my life as an observer and the shock of losing my brother to suicide had propelled me into my own life as a participant to this nightmare of an existence. I thought about suicide every second of every day. I became obsessed with the idea and there was a complete break in my psyche that made me hit a crossroad.

I was in mourning for almost 18 years.

During these many years of grieving, I researched, experimented, explored and studied numerous techniques, tools, findings, religions and concepts to try and understand what I could do to overcome this darkness that kept growing inside me. I felt limited, caged, held back and muffled. I had to find a better way to deal with my loss than to follow suit. I began to go inward.

Since there were no answers that I could find “without”, I decided to take my journey “within”.

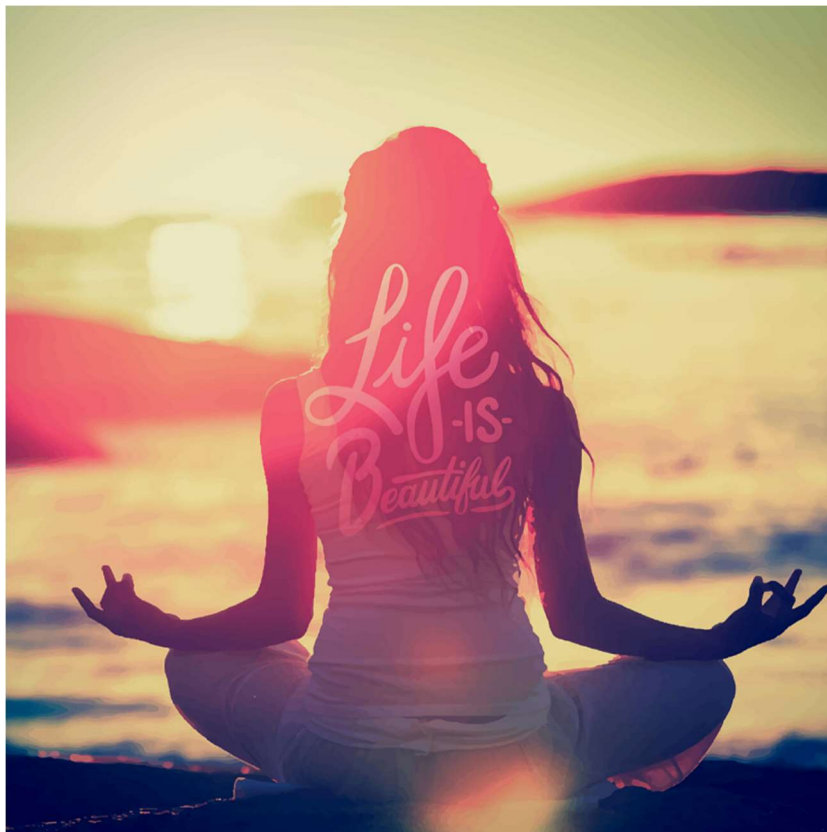
I knew that I had to approach my mental wellness in the same way as I had approached my battle with cancer (one that I had vanquished through the use of nutrition principles and visualization) back in 2007. I had to see my mental turmoil as a “dis-ease” of my mental state and mindset. I had to use what I had learned and put it to work to repair, resolve and renew my mental wellness.

I used a trifecta approach that I had come to know well and felt would bring me the results I yearned for. You see, for me, I believe the being is composed of 3 aspects. The physical body, the mental conditioning, and the essence of the spirit, that elusive energy that never dies. If I could get this trifecta working in synchronicity, I could basically conquer anything this life threw my way.

Increasing physical resilience

My first goal was to get my physical body back to a healthy state. I needed to feed my body the nutrition it needed to thrive, the water it needed to hydrate and the rest it needed to heal. I used an alkaline based dietary approach to increase my physical resilience. I ate mostly vegetables and a bit of protein. It was a 70/30 ratio. I drank at least 2 litres of water per day and used meditative sequencing to bring my mind to a delta state so that I could begin to repair my body with deep sleep sessions. Only once I had conquered this aspect of the journey could I move on to the next.

Conditioning the mental muscle



Once my body had recouped its strength to the point that I felt physically strong, I put all my focus and energy towards the conditioning of my mental muscle. I used meditation to quiet down the monkeys in my head that were continuously trying to derail my plans of getting better with their negative discourse and self-talk. I tried many different meditations created by Dr. Joe Dispenza that were individually designed to address specific issues a person might be trying to overcome. Some dealt with the balancing of the Chakras (inner energy centers), others with the quieting of the negative self-talk and some were simply designed to help one create a

meditation discipline using short morning and night sessions.

The next tool I used to condition my mental muscle was the powerful use of affirmations. This repetitive daily ritual has been the one thing that has completely changed my life and the thing I do religiously

every morning and every night. I often say that it is in these moments that I create the next chapter of my life. I have so often proved this statement to be true for myself that it is no longer a doubt or something I consider magic, it simply works...every time.

As I advanced in this aspect of my journey towards mental wellness, I could sense my ego losing its grip on my being. I could feel the fear, the pain, the anger simply dissolving and the void slowly filling with light.

Once the light was greater than the darkness, I was ready to embrace the last part of my journey towards a limitless mind.

Healing the broken spirit

At this point, my physical being was strong, my mental state had embraced a calmer existence and even if the monkeys still hosted parties in my mind once in a while, they no longer had permanent residency in my daily life. What was left was to heal was my broken spirit, my aching heart.

Every year around my brother's death I would either have a panic attack, fall deathly ill or my back would simply give out and I would end up in the hospital or on the table at my chiropractor. It always felt like my heart was imploding inward. The first few years it happened; I did not connect the dots. After years of recurrence though, my chiropractor started pointed it out to me as the dates began to get closer and closer to his death's anniversary. He just came out and stated "you're heart sick Klaude. Your heart has been subjected to such a trauma that as the event date approaches every year, it triggers your heart to have a similar reaction it had that day. You may not remember how you felt that very day because of the adrenaline that was flooding your body, but your heart remembers. Now, when the date appears, your heart recreates the physical pain but because the adrenaline is not flooding your body like it did that day, you experience the pain. There is nothing wrong with you physically, it's your heart and soul that needs healing".

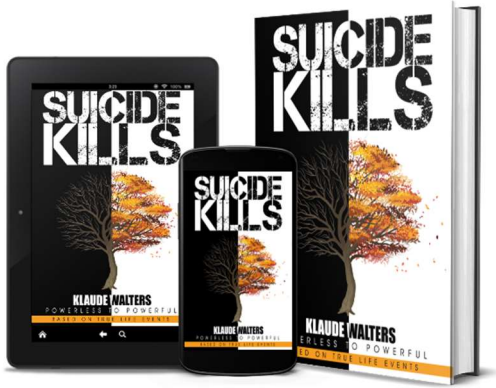
I was stunned. I later researched this on Google and found story after story reiterating my chiropractor's assessment of my case. It was true. Some sort of PTSD...but at the soul level.

Well, for me, there was only one way I could attempt healing my soul and that was through prayer. I needed to reconnect to my divine source and surrender myself to its will. I would simply sit in silence and speak inwardly to God. I would ask for his help, his healing, to wrap me up in his unconditional love and heal my spirit. I started journaling with intent. I would write to my inner self, the wounded part of me that needed love, support, forgiveness, and understanding. I realized there was much that I needed to reconcile with myself. I had to shed years of conditioning, layers after layers that belonged to others than myself and that I needed to let go of. I felt the need for authenticity, truth, and the dissolution of my fears...False Evidence Appearing Real.

I was FREE.

Once I came out of the last tunnel and felt my spirit break free from the weight of the loss of myself and my beloved brother Walter, and soar towards the light, I knew it was time to share my story and journey

towards my limitless mind with others of this world that needed me to be their lighthouse in the storm and bring them safely home.



I started writing “*Suicide Kills*”, my first novel, a memoir, in early 2019 and launched it in April of this year. It is a book about the journey I have just shared with you in this article. It is an amalgamation of true stories of some of the most difficult times in my life. It is meant to inspire others to transcend their darkness and make their way towards their own inner light. To awaken their own giant within and believe that they are not alone.

What does it mean to develop a limitless mindset and why is it the way to empowering your mental wellness?

It is the shedding of a lifetime of programing and conditioning that inadvertently happens as we live and mingle with the world. It is the inward quest to find our most authentic selves so that we may live a life that is true to our spirit, our God given talents and it is the empowerment and the awakening of our sleeping giant within that dissolves the fear we have of trying, the fear we have of being, the fear we have of living our most authentic life with total abandon and disregard for what others might think.

To learn more about my journey or the book *Suicide Kills*, you can visit my website at www.klaudewalters.ca or [Amazon.ca](https://www.amazon.ca)

Is Distance Running a Metaphor for Life?

By Clay Williams

I ran my first marathon in 2005. I was 45 years old and amazed that my body was able to do something so extreme. I remember being at the halfway point and thinking about how my finish time was going to be better than I expected. But the last five kilometres were not so encouraging; my feet and most of my muscles were really sore and I was seriously exhausted. It took me so long to finish that the race organizers were folding up tables when I crossed the finish line. But I finished.

Since then I've gone on to run longer and longer distances. In 2015 I ran 750 km from Port Severn to Ottawa. And just a couple of months ago I ran 200 miles in three days.

As I look back on that run, it occurs to me that running such a long run doesn't require an olympic class body with super elite fitness. Let's face it; I'm 60 years old and train three or four days a week, I'm hardly the elite professional athlete.

What it does take is a perceived effort far beyond what we give in day to day life. Perceived effort. That's an important concept. Let me explain. When I go on my morning runs, typically 10 to 14 km every second day, I run the first half of the distance at a comfortable pace. That pace can vary from day to day depending on food and rest and road conditions. At the halfway point I usually try to increase my pace just a little so that I run the second half at a faster pace than the first half. This is called negative splits. But my body is tired during that second half. In order to run just a little bit faster, the ACTUAL effort is just a little bit more, the actual energy expended is only slightly more. But because my body is already tired, the PERCEIVED effort is much higher.

When I run a really long race or event, for example 24 hours or more, I try to maintain a fairly slow speed for the first few hours, because I know that my body will eventually slow down, and the perceived effort required to maintain my speed will be huge. I remember a statistic from early on in my running career about 100 mile races. The average runner finishes the second half of a 100 mile race in a time that is 30% longer than finishing the first half. That says a lot about perceived effort.

Back in early October, I spent 75 hours running and covered 200 miles on a one mile loop course. The second 100 miles was something that I think most people are unwilling to do. While every part of my being was trying to tell me to stop and sleep and eat, my mind (and my support crew) was telling my body to keep moving. The perceived effort was off the charts, it was a monumental effort to "will" my body to trot down a small incline then walk up the other side, again and again. And the people who were my pace runners didn't even see it. As I ran and walked along the course, anybody looking at me would never know how exhausted I am, how my body is screaming for me to lie down and sleep.

And isn't that a metaphor for life? Aren't there times when the effort seems incredibly hard even though we're going much slower than we normally would? Aren't there times when we've persevered through something that we thought we might never endure? Aren't there times when people see a confident strong achiever when we feel broken, damaged, barely able to cope? And that person who is coping is not some super hero, not any sort of elite achiever, but instead just a regular person doing what needs to be done.

When I stand at the starting line of a multi-day run, I know that I have to get to the end. I don't *think* I can get there, I don't *hope* I can make it, I *know* that I have to get it done. And it gets done. Regardless of the effort, regardless of the obstacles that stand in the way, regardless of how I feel.

There are times in our lives when it feels like the obstacle in front of us is just too big, times when we're exhausted and it feels like we've been doing the same thing forever. But the hard things get done because we know they **MUST** be done, there is no plan B, the other option is not acceptable. And we get to the next day. And we look back and think: "wow, that was tough". You've probably been there. You've done it, and you can do it again.

Teachings from Molly By Anne Porteous

From early childhood, riding Shetland ponies on a beach in Sunderland England, to riding amongst the 'wildies' in Alberta Canada, Anne has a life-long love and appreciation of horses. Her journey led her to becoming a nurse which expands over 45 years. This career path allowed Anne to gain experience in leadership, education, and facilitation. In more recent years, Anne has been able to combine her passion for nursing with her passion for horses. Committed to being a life-long learner, Anne completed her diploma in Equine Science from the University of Guelph. Anne is certified through the LEAD* program and has completed her certification with the Equine Assisted Growth and Learning Association [EAGALA]. Anne is also a certified Erickson Professional Coach.



Equine assisted learning allows us to uncover parts of themselves they may not have had access to in the past—whether due to trauma or a diagnosed mental illness. By interacting with these loving and calm animals we can effectively address the person's treatment plan or learning goals, helping with issues such as addiction, domestic abuse, behavioral disorders, depression, anxiety and trauma.

Because horses are highly sensitive, people can work through their life struggles by interacting with the horses without feeling judgment or interpretation by another person.

In equine assisted learning, there is a focus on wellness taking a holistic approach to improvement in physical, social, emotional or cognitive functioning. As prey animals, horses are tuned to their environment and must be able to respond in an instant to changes and inconsistencies in order to stay alive. Their ability to scan humans and find our inconsistencies and growing edges is truly amazing.

Adele and I had worked together for a while. She struggled with confidence, finding her voice, and developing healthy boundaries. She was very creative and a visual learner. She used props available in my arena to create her “oasis” and during our sessions if anxiety rose, she was able to visit her oasis to help calm herself.



This particular day Adele arrived visibly distraught. She spoke to me about “issues” she was having with a person in her life. Adele decided to set up a course that would represent her experience with this individual incorporating pylons of various sizes. The small pylons represented her attempts to communicate and her attempts to “make things better”. She then placed two very large pylons, one representing her, the other pylon this “nasty” person. Her pylon had the red stuffed horse {seen in the picture above} which Adele chose because “red is the color of love, and I love horses”. While Adele was telling me about her creation, one of my horses, Molly walked over slowly and proceeded to knock over all the pylons with the exception of the one large pylon representing the nasty person. Unusual behavior for Molly. I asked Adele “what’s going on here?” She replied Molly just “trashed my course”. I asked Adele, why Molly might have done this. “Because Molly knows it’s not the way I feel; I’m really quite afraid of this person”. I invited Adele to create how she really felt which resulted in one large pylon [individual] and one small pylon [Adele]. With the truth now exposed, Adele and I were able to explore boundaries, body language, and how to be assertive without aggression.

Horses mirror our energy patterns and blind spots; behaviours that can stop us from moving forward in life or from moving into our own authentic self. Horses show us that to be effective in our daily lives, we must un-mask any internal frustrations and conflicts that may be preventing us from moving forward. What better way to examine how you think?

Adele was able to connect with Molly and participate in various on the ground [no riding] exercises learning how to establish her boundaries. Interestingly boundaries are shown in the oasis picture as the pool noodles/tube encircling the brightly colored sheet. According to Adele, she left “feeling empowered, gained confidence and self worth.”



Anne Porteous, owner of Sierra Acres Equine Assisted Learning Program can be contacted on Facebook, or anneporteous@sympatico.ca For more information about services go to www.sierracres.ca

Those Hard Luck Holiday Blues...

By Bill Brubacher

There's a rich and robust tradition about blues music that touches the heart and expresses a deep melancholy – a sadness and longing for better times from toil and hardship, from loss and pain and anger and helplessness over which it seems we have no control. At its best, the blues is a oneness of pain and pleasure, defeat and exaltation, sadness and joy.

And those contrasting feelings can be particularly poignant at this time of the year, especially when Covid-19 has stretched its cold, unfeeling spell on so many people's lives, separating us from loved ones, imprisoning us in restrictive conditions that are new and different, creating an atmosphere of stress and uncertainty.

And if we can't escape it, then I believe the next best thing we can do is to acknowledge it. I think by accepting it and not fighting the dark feelings it brings down on us, we can lighten its burden. It seems counter intuitive – like fighting fire with fire.

I can never get through this season without it taking me back to the trauma of losing most of my life savings.

I was 63 years old at the time, and what started out very bad, only got worse with the losing of my home, my partner of 20 years, the rest of my retirement and my will to live...

It was late October when I first fell into a deep suicidal depression. The 'Winter' in my head and heart had already taken hold of me and the actual 'arctic' winter of 2008 was settling in early that year. It was bitterly cold and stormy, like the winters I remembered as a child.

For a 'romantic' like me, those were the very kinds of winter conditions I enjoyed most when I was young.

They opened my heart and mind to all of the traditional physical, emotional and spiritual comforts and excitements of the festive season: from the radiant warmth of a crackling fireplace (if only in the movies) to the captivating glow of a flickering candle; listening to those perennial musical favourites of the season, to feeling the snuggled joy of sitting in my cozy chair escaping into a good book; from those childhood memories of the unforgettable aromas of turkey slow-cooking in my mother's small kitchen, to

wondering, as only a child can imagine, what was waiting in those brightly wrapped presents huddled under the canopy of sparkling lights and bulbs on the freshly cut Christmas tree?

Instead, that winter I felt lost and alone and deathly cold living somewhere outside my sentient body in some strange and fearful place I didn't recognize.

Returning home from the gym in the early evening felt like I was an intruder in another world, trespassing unseen through fresh snow-carpeted neighbourhoods, catching passing glimpses of happy revelry within decoratively framed living rooms spot-lighting the crimson darkness.

There are none so alone, as those on the 'outside' looking in and I felt like some kind of alien creature of the night.

That was only 12 years ago and a lifetime between then and now, and I re-experience those same feelings each year as though they were yesterday.

Those feelings can't be changed and neither can the season nor the reason for the reality of our lives right now whatever they are and whoever we are. However, we have more important things to focus on – and that's getting through...

It's natural and common to feel like we're the only ones living in this present darkness and/or predicament, and either over-play or under-play our emotions. Neither is realistic or healthy.

Our feelings are ours and they are legitimate and it's good to begin by recognizing them without feeling we're the only ones experiencing them at the moment – or comparing them with others. Simply knowing we're not alone in these difficult times or circumstances we're in, is hopefully helpful in keeping things real and in moving ahead, as best we can at our own pace.

By first accepting and respecting our emotions as felt by others in this very moment, the better we are able to sympathize with them and most importantly then, to give ourselves the strength we need to have to do what we can or cannot do, day by day. We are the only ones that can give ourselves the right to feel our own feelings and maybe to even say a prayer or send out strength to others and in so doing, feel somewhat better within. Try it.

Don't be afraid to feel your feelings and try not falling into the self-defeating trap of feeling sorry for yourself. You have far more strength than you realize. Trust that... believe me.

We may be feeling the life of the 'hard luck' blues right now, and let that spirit flow like music into your aching heart with a new rhythm to uplift and give you hope as it did to the slaves of the south not so many years ago.

We are all part of that ancient tradition of having to live with strife and struggle in life – from the beginning of time. Honour it – make the best of it and let it lift you higher, as only the 'blues' can do and as only you can sing it with all your hope and heart.

Thoughts ... from Colleen Heighington

Mental Health Issues have always been around since the beginning of time and we all will experience some of them during our lifetime. I've experienced some of them first hand and I know that others have too.

Mental Health Issues will never go away so I think that it is wise for us to know exactly what to do when they do enter into our lives.

Alcoholism is a Mental Health Issue that needs to be addressed as soon as possible as it can be devastating if left untreated. There are several ways in trying to make things better. AA(Alcoholics Anonymous) is an organization that has been around for a very long time and has helped out so many people who have a drinking problem. Family and friends are most welcome to attend their meetings giving support and encouragement for the person who has been affected. Even though family and friends will try hard to help out and who want the person to get well again and recover, the decision is not up to them but to the one who has the problem and they alone are the only ones that can make it happen.

Another Mental Health Issue such as Depression can also be devastating and if you suffer from it, it is time to go to the doctor's and get some help. The sooner the better so that in time, you can get back to feeling better and getting back to your normal self. I know of someone who gets bouts of depression and at one time, they needed to be hospitalized. They received therapy, excellent care and support and today is still doing very well. After being discharged from the hospital, they were going once a month to see their Professional Therapist and whenever they feel that they need their help, they still go which has been most helpful in their recovery.

Unfortunately, with the onset of COVID-19, Mental Health Issues are on the rise. We do not know when this will come to an end. Hopefully soon, when a vaccine will come out that will relieve us with the stress and anxiety that we have all been feeling since it all started. Everything in life has changed. It is a sad reality that this

has happened but we all must do our best in facing it and facing our fears. I find it most helpful to talk to someone that I can trust and share my anxieties with them. One day, they might need the same help and I can be that person for them.

In closing ... Mental Health Issues are part of life and it is up to us to decide on how to cope with them when they arise even if it means going to the doctor's office to get some help. The good news is that you will never walk alone as there will always be someone who will be there for you who truly cares on what you are going through. There are Therapists, Psychiatrists, Mental Health Workers and so many others to give you a helping hand. I am most thankful for the many professionals that are out there to help me if ever needed ... and I am also most thankful to the Dear Lord for His constant care and always being there for me too!!!