



"A Better Way" - 10 years stronger

June 2012 – June 2022, December News - Volume 11, Edition 12



***Holiday greetings to all!** Yes, the holiday season is upon us and there is much to do to make ready. First, I'd like to mention another tradition called Advent. Not so much a tradition as a Christian practice for many.*

The following post is about Advent from the "BPHope" (BiPolar Hope) blogsite. I'd like to share Jean's helpful insights about getting ready for the holidays. She states in a post dated Nov. 27, 2022

"First, I concentrate on the spirituality of the season and celebrate Advent, the weeks leading up to Christmas. For Christians, Advent is a time of preparing for the birth of the Christ Child and we are asked to get ourselves in tip-top condition to prepare for His arrival in our lives. In the Christian tradition, Christmas began on Dec. 25 and lasted until Epiphany, the 12th day of Christmas, with the arrival of the three wise men. I found that celebrating Christ's birth during this season was especially meaningful. But it also helped alleviate the rush typically found in modern-day celebrations, where everything is focused on just one day, a "make it or break it" day. I've written cards, made Christmas cookies, and invited friends over during these twelve days and it's been so nice to extend the holiday and not have it over with one fell swoop. ...

Physical and financial limitations and lack of storage space have forced me to eliminate much of what is typically done at Christmas. But I still enjoy writing a Christmas letter (and including a new recipe that I've discovered) and sending cards to friends and family. I don't have a tree and I don't receive many gifts these days, but I decorate my home with beautiful candles and find Christmas carols online – I'll even enjoy a "fireplace" from YouTube! I did splurge last year

and bought a beautiful planter that I filled with live greens. I look forward to doing that again this year."

Thank-you, Jean for your sharing!

Brad Hoefs is the author of *"Fresh Hope: Living Well in Spite of a Mental Health Diagnosis."* Here's a post from Brad Hoefs on coping with holiday stress, from BPHope.

"12 Keys to Living Well Through the Holidays" (Six are stated herein)

1. Adjust Expectations- or he suggests to not have any. Brad states, *"If I have no expectations—I enjoy the holidays more."*

2..Don't Isolate- Brad says, "I had to do three things to isolate less,

1. I asked others to come to me and hang out with me, as opposed to me going out.
2. I forced myself to get out of the house at least once each day. Even if it was only to take a short walk. It always helped.
3. I allowed my wife to urge me strongly to get up and get out of the house when I was not accomplishing the first two things. I didn't always like it, and I didn't always do it. But she didn't give up on me or get mad at me. She was lovingly very insistent.

3. Enjoy the Little things- Focusing on the little things can make a big difference. Life is made up mostly of little things. And simply enjoying them is important. I always have to remind myself not to make the little things into big things. And remember, the little things that are not enjoyable—or even painful—are nothing more than little.

What are the little things you enjoy? Walking or walking your dog, listening to any kind of music that works for you. It may not even be holiday music, writing a letter to a friend, writing in your journal, calling a friend, reading a book or magazine, baking, watching a funny movie are a few ideas.

4. Give to Others – Giving of your time is a true gift, which takes one out of their funk or could help you escape from negative thoughts. Brad states, *"When I am "other"-focused, I do much better. Giving to others and helping others who are in need allows me to keep the focus off of myself."*

There many ways to do this. Look up your local soup kitchen, find a St. Vincent de Paul Ctr. to volunteer at, make cookies for an elder or housebound neighbor, walk a neighbor's dog.

5. Remember—This, Too, Shall Pass – And, thank



heavens for that. As I continue my recovery for a 2nd time from Covid, which wasn't quite as painful & debilitating as the first go round. The medication I took seemed to work a lot faster. Here it is less than one week after my diagnosis and I'm able to create this newsletter, albeit slowly. I thank my friends & some family for their prayers!

6. Remember, Depression Lies –Brad's words: *"If you and I begin to believe the lies of depression, then depression can take an even stronger hold on us. I always have to remind myself if depression is lurking around the corner or even if it has come to visit to use my rational thinking regarding all of the lies and deceptions that it has to offer. Despite how dark depression feels, I fight to use my logical mind over it."*

*Regarding depression, I have a little story to share. Many years ago- possibly 8 or 9 I was in Austin visiting my dear sister, Jackie. We were on our way to meet some of her family at the very famous "Hula Hut." We parked the car in a crowded parking lot and were traipsing thru the rocky ground of the lot. On the ground I spotted a square cased CD. I said to her, "Do you want it?" She said, "No, you saw it first you can have it." So, I indeed, picked it up. It was facedown, but when I turned it over I read the cardboard case that the CD was in. Here is what it read, **"Living the Liberated Life and Dealing with the Pain Body,"** Eckhart Tolle. Inside were not one, not two but three CD's. Almost three hours of positive constructive advise for free! Of course, at that point I thought not much about what it could be about. But years later and from time to time, I will play one of those CD's. Disc Two has some interesting material but one concept that struck me some time ago was the Topic- **"Feeding the Pain body."** What might you ask is the pain body? According to Mr. Tolle, it is when you give in to feeding it by allowing those awful ruminations of sadness, loneliness, anger or other emotives consume your thoughts. In his delivery, he often laughs and makes unusual sounds as he plays on the words of **"Feeding the Pain Body."** It's not funny, I know, but his laughter, I suppose helps you escape your awful state, if that may apply to you. And, it has to me, more recently. In case you hadn't figured it out, Tolle recommends not to feed that pain body! For myself, I supplement with **B Complex** & Chromium, eat eggs almost daily as well as hamburgers that provide choline and other B vitamins. I've also found intense strength training helps immensely releasing those endorphins.*

Brad has a podcast, ["Fresh Hope for Mental Health."](#) He is a certified Intentional Peer Specialist,

and also serves on the State of Nebraska Advisory Committee on Mental Health. Brad was diagnosed with bipolar I disorder in 1995. He has a BA in communications and a master of divinity degree.

As for the six remaining **"Keys to Living Well,"** we'll explore those in the ABWay January newsletter. I hope these will help you in the weeks ahead, when you start to get too busy or too stressed and need to find a way to step back (as Justine often says,)or relax.



Why exercise? Let's hear it from the experts. In Health magazine a special supplement was created entitled, **"Living Well with Schizophrenia."** A growing body of doctors have come to believe that *"A holistic approach is best,"* stating medications can only go so far. How true, we've known this for many years when we began A Better Way and shared these fundamentals in our newsletters & presentations. Experts also announce thru research that, **"exercise benefits the brain"** and in particular the hippocampus, which handles memory & learning. Yes, this too, we've shared.

Additionally, a 2016 analysis in *Schizophrenia Bulletin: The Journal of Psychosis and Related Disorders* found that "aerobic exercise improved attention, social cognition & awareness and working memory." Other research published in *Frontiers in Psychiatry* revealed that aerobic exercise also improves other symptoms of motivation and an inability to feel pleasure.

More studies show when participants who were engaged in a regular aerobic exercise program and completed four hours of computer- based brain training, their cognitive improvement was three times greater than those who only did brain training. Wow! Looks like it's time for me to get some computers set up for our group... so they can come in during the weekdays & do these programs. It will be my New Year's goal.

In the meantime, cold weather or not, get moving. Your goal- four sessions per week, at minimum. Your brain & body will thank-you. ☺



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Quercetin is our champion vitamin this month; offering many benefits for heart and brain health. One may note that our bodies do not make quercetin. But don't overlook the amazing health benefits it offers including reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease by lowering blood pressure and decreasing LDL levels. Though it can be found in apple skins, green veggies, blueberries, onions, citrus fruits, red grapes, green tea and red wine it would be beneficial to intake at least 500 mg. daily to gain real benefits. Additionally, Quercetin supports brain function by reducing amyloid plaque formation in the brain. There's so much more to this magical potent antioxidant. So eat your apples with the skins on them! For more info go to the Natural Grocers' Health Hotline



Our November meeting Bunco Game Day was a huge hit, with 12 friends in attendance. Pizza, treats, chicken wings, brownies, cash prizes and a party bag for each, what more could you ask for?



**A Better Way Holiday Sharing party
(It's a Potluck!!
takes place Sat., December 10, 2022**

12:30 – 3:00 p.m.

**Bring a Food Item to share, please
& one Wrapped Gift- gender neutral
for our Chinese gift exchange**

Please reply to Evelyn by Dec. 8th

jeanne323@sbcglobal.net



Prelude Clubhouse

announces many social opportunities

& recovery programs

1947 K Avenue, #A200, in Plano 75074

<http://www.preludeclubhouse.org/>

I.e. Self-Care Café 1st Tues @ 2:00p virtual

Program Meetings every Thurs. @ 1:00 p.m.

Call Mary Robinson for more info- 469-552-7461

NAMI NORTH TEXAS

offers peer Support meetings in Dallas & Plano
A support group for individuals struggling with all
types of mental health challenges

Virtual meetings are;

1st & 3rd Thursdays @ 6:00 - 7:30 PM

2nd & 4th Saturdays @ 1:30 - 3:00 PM

Register at

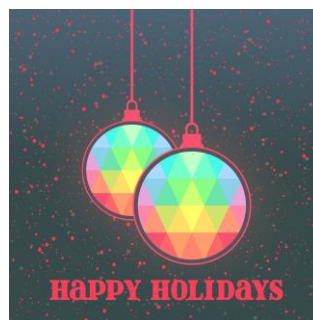
<https://www.naminorthtexas.org/support-group-schedule>

Family support "In Person" meetings take place

1st Tuesday of month 6:00 – 7:30 p

at Hunter's Glen Baptist church

4001 Custer Rd, Plano, TX 75023



and

***"Happy December Birthdays!" to -
Justine, Rick, Bette, Cici, Deb,
Sherry, Jeanne, Thom, Mike & more***