



“Recovery and healing happen in relationship.” - PSL for the 21st Century

A Message from Patty Blum, Call For Action!

In life we receive many messages from an infinite source of messengers such as through conversations, readings, sermons, a tv show we are watching or a podcast we are listening to, or even watching clouds float by. The important element is that we notice, listen, observe, let the message sink in and then ultimately respond. Our response becomes a call to action and it may save a life, maybe our own.

For example, a message might be in a rain or snow shower. Noticing that message brings our attention to the weather and then that may trigger an awareness of those without homes around us. Listening may be looking at what we can do. Can we open our homes, donate some time, money, blankets, coats, or socks to those in need? To take that step of action, we first need to notice the message.



Noticing the message requires awareness, often a stillness or a level of attention that looks beyond the “to do” list or immediate activities. This requires being mindful. This requires us to stop business, even for a moment, to simply listen, observe and notice the world around us.

Today, our call for action may be to simply practice being mindful. Still your awareness and allow yourself to find peace internally and externally. Bring your consciousness to the present moment, so you are ready to receive messages and be prepared for your call for action.

Patty Blum is Crestwood’s Chief Strategy Officer and Executive Vice President

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I am quite sure that Macy's and Nordstrom's department stores would not hire me in their gift-wrapping departments. I take a lot of time to buy what I think will be desirable gifts for others, but I don't seem to possess the skill, time, and focus to wrap them all up into a beautiful appealing present. Besides, I often find that many people, including me, hurry through the unwrapping part to get to the gifts inside. Perhaps it would be good if we could all learn to slow down a little to appreciate the wrapping around the gifts.



In many ways, the people who come to receive services at Crestwood arrive with sorrowful wrappings around their hearts and spirits. Inside each of them are beautiful gifts that come inside all that sorrow. Their invaluable gifts have come with a great price. The poet Robert Browning Hamilton said it best when he wrote:

*I walked a mile with pleasure;
She chatted all the way;
But left me none the wiser
For all she had to say.*

*I walked a mile with Sorrow;
And ne'er a word said she;
But oh. The things I learned from her
When Sorrow walked with me.*

Opening Gifts: Now when my grandson Harvey was three years-old, he liked to open everyone's presents. We adults were always okay with that, but his five-year-old sister, Gianna, was not going to have it! She wanted to open her own gifts. I think it's the same with the people we serve. It's important we don't compel people to pull back

their sorrow so they can acknowledge their gifts. Instead, gift unwrapping can best happen in the context of a recovery relationship when we've spent time with them heart to heart. And perhaps when the timing is right, we can share some gifts we got from our sorrow. Maybe then they might be in a better place to open and appreciate their own.

Having said that, here are 12 gifts that can come from sorrow:

1. **Patience**
2. **Graciousness**
3. **Humility**
4. **Empathy**
5. **Compassion**
6. **Appreciation of laughter**
7. **Appreciation for family and friends**
8. **Release of resentments and the small stuff**
9. **Reverence for the fragility and sacredness of life**
10. **Understanding that time matters**
11. **Gratitude**
12. **Resilience**

The author C.S. Lewis wrote, "We can ignore even pleasure. But pain insists upon being attended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world." And the Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu wrote, "New beginnings are often disguised as painful endings."

One other thing is for certain about gift giving and opening.... when people walk through sorrow, we are the gift when we stay in the present!



Viva la Evolution!

A new podcast on Growth, Resilience, and Transformation

- ◆ Promote the recovery process with individuals and teams.
- ◆ Shift your organization's culture to a recovery focus that builds resilience.
- ◆ Listen to interviews with important leaders in the recovery field and hear from people who are in recovery and how they got there.
- ◆ Discover unique ways peer support specialists can support your team and enhance recovery service outcomes.

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Conversation!**



Happy Hollow Days?

By Chris Martin

Get ready to hear and rehear the song and lyric: “Happy Holidays, Happy Holidays. May the merry bells keep ringing happy holidays to you...” For a period of 40 days starting on Thanksgiving and lasting until New Year’s Day, we’ll hear this song played over and over in stores, on the radio, and on television.



For many people, however, these 40 days won’t be a journey of holiday happiness or merriness. Instead, for them, it will herald in some hollow days of grief, sadness, and loneliness. So what’s the reason for their hollow day season? And how can we help turn their days of grief into relief; sadness into gladness; and rejection into connection?

Let’s start with what can make a heart feel hollow. For some people, it’s because they lost their freedom and now live behind locked doors. For other people, it’s because the holidays remind them of family and loved ones they lost or perhaps never had. For some people, it’s because they have no one to care about or feel no one cares about them. For other people, hope is more like a flicker than a flame due to dire circumstances in their lives. And for all of us, hollowness can come from a lack of connection and community.

This lack of connection and community spreads far beyond people we support in recovery. In early 2023, the U.S. Surgeon General, Vivek Murthy, MD, warned about the epidemic of loneliness now affecting half of all Americans. In Murthy’s alarming report, he declares, “Loneliness is far more than just a bad feeling—it harms both individual and societal health. It is associated with a greater risk of cardiovascular disease, dementia, stroke, depression,

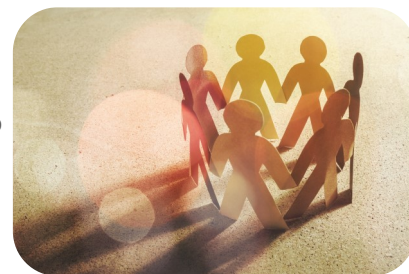
anxiety, and premature death. The mortality impact of being socially disconnected is similar to that caused by smoking up to 15 cigarettes a day, and even greater than that associated with obesity and physical inactivity.”¹

Notably, Murthy’s antidote links connection with community. This is because a person can be surrounded by a whole community of people, but if there is no reciprocal connection, then loneliness and isolation persist.

His prescription, then, consists of four keys to connection which are easy to do:

- 1) Answer a phone call from a friend and call a friend as well;
- 2) Invite someone over to share a meal;
- 3) Listen and be fully present during a conversation; and
- 4) Seek out opportunities to serve others and invite them to serve with us.

So how can we turn hollow days into holidays? Well, we who provide recovery services and peer support can offer connection and community this season.

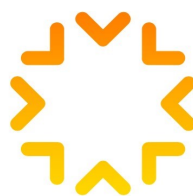


We can help people who experience the hollow days by stepping onto the hallowed ground of relationship where recovery and healing happen. And maybe then we can all sing, “May the merry bells keep ringing happy holidays to you.”

1. Our epidemic of isolation and loneliness: the U.S. surgeon general’s advisory on the healing effects of social connection and community. May 2023. Retrieved on 11/25/2023 from <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/surgeon-general-social-connection-advisory.pdf>

Viva la Evolution!

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**The Alliance
for Rights
and Recovery**
Formerly NYAPRS

CRRS has been very busy in our ongoing work to schedule Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Training, as well as provide ongoing supports towards exam preparation and job placement supports. The CRRS team is also engaged in facilitating the **Crestwood Behavioral Health, Inc.'s Peer Employment Learning Center (PELC)** at three current campuses in San Diego, Bakersfield, and Eureka. CRRS has begun to roll out the Resilient Living Plan through our PELC mentors and interns to support exciting and empowering recovery programming at all our PELC sites.



CRRS continues to adapt to changes introduced through CalMHSA, Specifically, and in light of the end of all scholarships, we at Crestwood RRS are looking at innovative ways to support individuals seeking the **Certified Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist (CMPSS) Specialization** areas without scholarships. One viable option is for agencies who have only a few individuals who are interested in completing a particular specialization area to combine efforts with other agencies where we could create some significant cost savings to deliver the training to a larger cohort, with the reduced costs shared proportionally across the participating agencies. If you are

interested in this as an option, please communicate that with our CRRS Team. You can visit our website RecoveryResilienceSolutions.com or call us at 209.313.4511. We can support facilitating some of the scheduling and marketing with other interested agencies.

On November 15th, **CRRS presented at the Santa Barbara County Department of Behavioral Wellness, Annual Peer Recognition Event** to support the integration of Peer Support Specialists on the service delivery team. Santa Barbara Behavioral Wellness is a leading example of recognizing the value of peer support services.

Chris Martin will be representing **Crestwood RRS at the Illinois Community Behavioral Health Association meeting in Chicago, December 4-5, 2023.**

The **2024 CRRS schedule for our online training platform for the Med-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification** has been created and you can find information about the training dates and how to pre-register. We look forward to closing out 2023 with very strong training numbers and the incredible and predictable successes of our amazing graduates on getting their State CMPSS certification!

And, in closing, we wish you a joyous holiday season and a few moments to spend in gratitude for all your life-changing contributions and other beautiful achievements of 2023!

- Jim Ritchie, CRRS Director of Operations

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Where: The Peer Employment Learning Center at 4085 Colts Way, San Diego, CA 92115

Contact Us to Register

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209.313.4511**

RecoveryResilienceSolutions.com