### The Ice Breaker

### Moms and Dads Against Meth, Inc.

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"Love is not blind - it sees more, not less. But because it sees more, it is willing to see less."

Rabbi Julius Gordon

### UPCOMING EVENTS

**Open House** 

# The Butterfly House June 22

11 a.m. to 2 p.m. 336 N. Washington Ave. St. Croix Falls, Wisconsin

Join us in celebrating the one-year anniversary of the Butterfly House, and take a tour around this beautiful Victorian home. If the milkweed in our garden is doing its job, there should be Monarch butterflies in various stages of development, and perhaps you will meet some of the "human butterflies" who are transforming their lives in the house.

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# Otto Bremer Foundation Supports M.A.D.A.M.

Moms and Dads Against Meth, Inc. and The Butterfly House were recently awarded a \$15,000 grant from the Otto Bremer Foundation, a charitable trust that authorizes grants to nonprofit organizations in Minnesota, North Dakota, and Wisconsin.

The grant will help pay for the running of the Butterfly House, a place for women recovering from addiction, as well as other projects that advance M.A.D.A.M.'s mission to eradicate meth.

The history of the Bremer Foundation began when Otto Bremer arrived in the United States from Germany in 1886. Over the next 35 years, he became a successful banker and a deeply involved citizen. In 1944, Bremer's knowledge and concern for the strengths and hardships of the rural and immigrant experience, coupled with his commitment to countryside banks, led to the formation of the Otto Bremer Foundation. In creating a foundation, Bremer sought to insure the perpetuation of the Bremer banks and the ultimate return of his personal wealth to his "family" of communities. Sixty plus years later, the Otto Bremer Foundation continues to honor Bremer's wishes by carrying out his expressed interests and concerns. As a major shareholder of Bremer Financial Corporation, the Foundation gives priority to communities where Bremer banks are also present.

The M.A.D.A.M./Butterfly House organization is proud to have been found worthy of such a generous grant, and we want to extend our sincere thanks to the Otto Bremer Foundation for its support.

## Drama Queens: Can you afford to stay for the show?

There's at least one in every family, group of friends, workplace, and social gathering: the Drama Queen. She or he (yes, there are definitely *male* Drama Queens) can take the simplest circumstance and turn it into an EVENT, with our Queen as the star, whether fighting for justice ("This sandwich is *not* what I wanted!") or seeking pity (". . . and the waitress was so *mean* to me after I changed my order!").

As a rule, the Drama Queen is self-absorbed, selfish, and egotistical, and seems to be ever on the alert for an occasion to drum up some excitement or controversy. The D.Q. often gets a high from the rush of adrenaline that comes with the excitement of the drama she creates. When he or she is confronted, challenged, or angered, the excitement and drama is escalated to ethic proportions, and the real trouble is that *nearly everything* in the D.Q.'s life is dissatisfactory, disappointing, or provocative. This person is actually *addicted* to the drama!

Everyone needs attention and affirmation, but the D.Q. craves it in an unhealthy way, wanting all attention in the room to be focused on her, and doing everything she can to get it. That can make for entertainment at parties and other social settings, but it is a distraction at work or in meetings.

The D.Q. might be great fun to have as an acquaintance, and if her bubbly personality makes up for her selfish disregard for others, she might even make a good friend. The flip side of that, however, is that she can be so demanding and dramatic, she wears people out.

We all have a little Drama Queen in us, but if you answer yes to more than four of the following questions, you could be a full-fledged D.Q..

Do you complain more than you feel gratitude?

Do you have some sort of crisis or emotional outburst on a daily basis?

Do you demand perfection from others, while cutting yourself a great deal of slack?

Are you manipulative, trying to control others' actions and behaviors?

Do you blame others for your own shortcomings?

Do you consistently judge others based on appearance and reject them accordingly?

Do you try to "read between the lines" to such an extent that you often draw wrong conclusions and see conspiracy where there is none?

Do you often criticize and rarely encourage others?

Does being the center of attention make you feel complete?

Do you feel the need to change others, rather than adopt a "live and let live" philosophy?

A lot of people who are addicts are also Drama Queens. Inherent in the Drama Queen's character is a lack of self-esteem and self-love, which may have led to the addiction. It's an odd dichotomy, a person who craves attention and even demands it, but doesn't really feel worthy of it.

Being a Drama Queen is not conducive to a life of serenity and peace, obviously, and it can derail an addict's attempts at recovery. Therefore, delving into whether or not one has D.Q. attributes and behaviors is important. An honest and searching moral inventory, such as one does in Step 4 of a 12-Step program, is an essential part of the self-discovery process, and can help us understand where we need to improve.

Whether you are a Drama Queen or find that you have them in your family or group of friends, you

will need to learn to avoid buying into the drama. Try to view it as if you were in the very back of a theater, stay detached and see if you can understand what is motivating "the characters" to do and say things. Since you're just watching it, there's no need for you to jump up on the stage yourself, and you may gain some insight into what motivates the Drama Queens in your life (even if you are one of them!). It will amaze you how much more serene and peaceful you will be when you leave the drama to the movies!

### **T.O.A.D.**(Think Over And Discuss)

### Topics



This is boring!

Ah! Sobriety at last! After a seemingly endless struggle with addiction, you're free! The meetings you attend are interesting and you love being able to add to the discussion. You embrace your Higher Power and pray with all your heart; you even go back to church! It's all like a wonderful vacation from being yourself; you're

this terrific new person who gets praise and love from everyone . . .

Vacations end, however, and in time, the newness wears off. People get used to you being sober; they're not as excited about it, and you don't get as many pats on the back as you did a few months ago. You're still glad to be drug-and-alcohol-free, but it's not as fun as it was at first. It's kind of . . . well, boring.

Sometimes the meetings seem to drag as you listen someone else's problems and you don't feel like adding comments. Sometimes your mind wanders to things you'd rather be doing than sitting in a meeting.

Then someone says "the rest of my life" and it makes you think "Really? This is how it will be for the rest of my life? Wait a minute, I didn't sign on for 'bored to tears for the rest of my life!"

You're in dangerous territory now. As much as you have liked being sober, your addiction can still wedge doubts into it and make you believe that it's not all it's cracked up to be. If you keep following this line of thinking, you'll be using or drinking again in no time. STOP!

Think. Was it the fun things you did while you were high or just the being high that made it fun? Be honest, now. Wasn't getting high the point? That being high made things seem more interesting, more fun, than they actually were? (The time you took apart the stereo and cleaned every wire and circuit with a cotton swab . . . Fun or Meth? The time you got drunk and drove through your neighbor's garden . . . Fun or lawsuit? Every time your family has looked at you with that mix of pity and horror at yet another thing you've done because of your addiction . . . Fun or Done?)

Let's take a look at what the AA Big Book has to say:

We have been speaking to you of serious, sometimes tragic things. We have been dealing with alcohol in its worst aspect. But we aren't a glum lot. If newcomers could see no joy or fun in our existence, they wouldn't want it. We absolutely insist on enjoying life. We try not to include in cynicism over the state of the nations, nor do we carry the world's troubles on our shoulders. When we see a man sinking into the mire that is alcoholism, we give him first aid and place what we have at his disposal. For his sake, we do recount and almost relive the horrors of our past. But those of us who have tried to shoulder the entire burden and trouble of others find we are soon overcome by them.

So we think cheerfulness and laughter make for usefulness. Outsiders are sometimes shocked when we bust into merriment over a seemingly tragic experience out of the past. But why shouldn't we laugh? We have recovered, and have been given the power to help others.

The meaning is clear: there is great joy in recovery, and it is deeper when shared with others who have been through the hell of addiction and have found their way out.

Remember that there is a reason for AA and NA members to think in terms of "one day at a time." Everything is much easier when taken in small steps, one step at a time. . . Looking up to the top of the hill, thinking how far it is and how hard it will be to get there, only makes the climbing worse.

Define fun. You've had to change your thinking about a lot of things since you started your recovery, and the concept of "fun" might be one more of those things. Think of what you enjoy most, what brings you the most contentment, what makes you laugh, and use those things as your cue to what will keep you interested and engaged in your new sober life. Remember, you had fun before you started drinking or using drugs, and you can certainly have fun without them . . . you just might have to relearn your "having fun" skills!

Ask sober friends, such as those in your NA or AA meetings, what they do to keep boredom (or imagined boredom) at bay. Maybe they have a hobby or skill they can share with you. Look into your community for classes you could take or clubs you could join. Find things that can get you excited about your new life.

Anything can become tedious if you fail to put your whole heart into it. Put staying sober at the top of your list, and do everything you can to make it work. Find a book of meditations on sobriety and serenity and give yourself time to read and *absorb* one every day. Don't just read it and think that that's enough; apply it to yourself and think of it often throughout the day.

Stay in the moment wherever you are. Keep focused in meetings, listen to what is said and be ready to reach out and help others with what you can add to the discussion. Try to pray with your whole self, shutting out other thoughts and just speaking and listening to your Higher Power. Notice the world around you and take pleasure in the little things.

Talk about it. Don't be too shy or embarrassed to bring up the topic of "sober boredom" at meetings or fellowship times after meetings. It is doubtful that any alcoholic or addict has not dealt with the thought that using was more fun, so you will be understood and not judged. Those who have been through it can guide you on your way and offer ideas to help you.

Friends. Your old drinking and using friends are not going to understand your new sobriety or how you could be having a good time. They are very likely to tell you that you were more fun when you were using, that you're boring now and they don't enjoy your company. Maybe they won't say anything at all, but they'll stop calling and inviting you to do things with them. It hurts, and it happens to nearly everyone who is in recovery. Find it in yourself to be grateful for the chance to see who your true friends are and let the others go their way.

A young man in an NA meeting was comparing his old thinking about fun with his new, sober frame of mind:

"I thought we were having fun, getting high and doing all these crazy things. Now that I look back on it, I realize that we were just *excited*. So maybe it was the excitement that made it seem more fun. But once you're done being excited, everything else seems like a let-down. Now, when I'm laughing with someone or working on something I like doing, I'm not just excited, I'm actually having fun!"

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#### Word of the Month: love

We all use words to praise, to express love, to hurt, to vent our anger, and to try to make others understand us better. We've chosen twelve words that we think can have both very positive and very negative connotations, and we'll take a look at both sides each month.

Love is an appropriate word for the month in which we celebrate Mother's Day. A mother's love is the perfect example of perfect love: unconditional, all-encompassing, gentle, and unselfish. There is truth in the old saying "a face only a mother could love": mothers can overlook flaws, defects of character or appearance, and see only the beauty in their child.

### To love is to receive a glimpse of heaven.

### - Karen Sunde

Perhaps the early love we experience can give us an idea of our Higher Power's love for us. Like our mothers, He loves us unconditionally, supports us, hopes we make the right decisions, but is there to pick us up when we don't. He can overlook our flaws and sins and see our potential (wouldn't it be great if more of us could do that for ourselves?). Also like our mothers, He allows us to make our own mistakes and suffer the consequences. Most mothers know when to step in (grabbing our hands before we run into traffic) and when to let go (allowing us the purple hair dye, even though it would still be there for school pictures). It could be that our Higher Power does the same for us, allowing for our free will (and boy, can we be willful!) to make mistakes and learn from them.

### Love is an act of endless forgiveness, a tender look which becomes a habit.

### **–Peter Ustinov (1921 - 2004)**

Another aspect of love can be learned when we find ourselves in love with another person. At its best, it's selfless, kind, and reciprocal; at its worst, it's painful and humiliating. A first love that doesn't work out can leave a scar on your heart forever; a long, loving marriage can soothe away all the hurts you've ever suffered.

### Learning to love yourself is the greatest love of all.

### -Michael Masser and Linda Creed

A surprising number of people don't get wonderful lessons in love from their mothers. Mothers who are addicted, mentally ill, self-absorbed, resentful, or who suffered abuse as a child are often not equipped to give unselfish, unconditional love to their child. In cases like that, it would be wise for the rest of us to keep in mind the African saying "It takes a village to raise a child" and extend love to all the children we meet.

Those early lessons in love from our families are essential keys to our learning to love ourselves. Being treated with love, respect, and affection create the ideal atmosphere for self-love and self-esteem to grow. The message a child internalizes is "I must be worthy of love, since everyone loves me, so I will love myself, too."

A healthy sense of self-esteem is priceless. Those who have it are less likely to fall into drug use or addiction and other dangerous behaviors; those who do fall into bad choices will be better equipped to recover. The sense of shame that so often accompanies addiction is much easier to overcome if there is a base of self-love buried beneath it.

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It seems kind of ironic that when we speak of feeling love for someone or something, we often say "I *fell* in love with her" or "I'm *falling* in love with my new car" with the implication that it is a good thing, even though *falling* itself is generally not a great experience. Fortunately, for many of us, we find that love is a really soft place to land . . .

### Fall not in love, therefore; it will stick to your face.

### -National Lampoon, "Deteriorata"

Police in Brooklyn Park, Minnesota recently raided a suspected meth lab, only to discover that the suspect was a salt-water aquarium.

A sub-contractor for CenterPoint Energy had reported feeling light-headed and sick from a chemical smell in a household where he was installing a water heater.

The information was enough to enable detectives to get a warrant to raid and search the premises. Officers broke the front door in, rousing 54-year-old Kathy Adams from a nap.

Adams and her husband were handcuffed and warned not to speak to each other while officers searched the home for evidence. Mrs. Adams kept trying to assure the officers that they had the wrong house, but police continued their search.

A short time later, police realized that there had been a mistake. The strong smell came from vinegar and pickling lime, which were in clearly marked containers in a bathroom Mr. Adams uses to mix chemicals for his salt water fish tank

Mrs. Adams recalled a conversation with the workman, saying that she had referred to her husband's "laboratory for his fish tank" and gestured toward the sizable salt water aquarium.

Police apologized for the mistake and later sent a contractor to repair the broken front door. Mrs. Adams, still upset by the incident, said that she is considering a lawsuit.

While I'm all for reporting suspected meth labs and meth use to police, I'm also in favor of using common sense. Money and time could have been saved if there had been just a *little* more investigation into the case. If nothing else, couldn't an undercover officer have visited the house before a warrant and forcible entry was used? It seems to me in this case, the detective in charge would have benefited from a little more knowledge about the nature of meth labs and meth cooks.

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### "The Other Side of the Glass"

### By Laurie B.

Along with drug addiction, often follows criminal activity. The two intertwine, becoming one and the same, feeding off each other. The revolving door of the system becomes your safest "home". They know you all too well; they know your family, your friends; that is if you're fortunate to have that support. You do your time, you get out, and you try to start anew. Some make it, some do not. Some are comforted by that inside "safe place", known as jail or prison. Some that try have a felony or more on their record. Many doors are slammed in your face when you try to seek employment, become that responsible, respectable person society says we should be. You cannot get an apartment; you do not have a driver's license which maybe is more of a luxury than a necessity depending on how one might look at it. If you were lucky, some form of treatment was offered to you. Unfortunately, many times it is not. Regardless of your addictions, your situation in life, you are a criminal in the eyes of the law and also society. Much of society isn't concerned on the how or why you became an addict slash criminal. The concern is "lock them up" or "get them off the street". The problem, of course, is "the revolving door", generally resulting in larger crimes, bigger addictions and the other actions that are created from this. Often times, it is in the teenage years that one starts the path of addiction. By the time you are in your early 20's, perhaps you've been in jail more times than you can remember. You have no real skills on how to get a job much less hold a job because you've possibly never really had one. Your self-esteem is little to nothing. You do not want sympathy from people, you want a second chance. Rejection is hard when you have a higher self esteem; you have experience in what you are pursuing. Rejection when you're trying to stay clean is often nearly another "sentence". A closer look beyond the glass; you will find some pretty amazing people.

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**Native American Prayer** 

Oh, Great Spirit whose voice I hear in the winds,

Whose breath gives life to the world, hear me . . .

I come to you as one of your many children,

I am small and weak.

I need your strength and your wisdom.

May I walk in beauty.

Make my eyes ever behold the red and purple sunset.

Make my hands respect the things you have made,

And my ears sharp to your voice.

Make me wise so that I may

Know the things that you have taught your children,

The lessons you have written in every leaf and rock.

Make me strong

Not to be superior to my brothers,

But to fight my greatest enemy . . .

Myself...

Make me ever ready to come to you with straight eyes so that when life fades as the fading sunset, my spirit may come to you without shame.