



BRIGHT tomorrows®

**"Mobilizing churches to better serve
those with mental health concerns"**

We are dedicated
to reflecting
the compassion
of Jesus Christ
by promoting
mental health
and assisting those
struggling with
mental illness.



**"For I know the plans
I have for you,"
declares the LORD,
"plans to prosper you
and not to harm you,
plans to give you
hope and a future."**

Jeremiah 29:11



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Thanksgiving

Give Thanks for Pain and Suffering—Seriously?

As a Christian I have an appreciation for Scripture and verses of comfort and encouragement. However, there are verses over which I have stumbled. For example, Paul penned to the Christians of Thessalonica in Greece: "give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (1 Thessalonians 5:18 NIV). There are many things for which I am thankful for during this season of Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years. There are circumstances, however, that do not elicit from me an easy thanksgiving response.

I have to admit that I have a problem giving thanks when faced with facts about massively catastrophic human suffering, as well as when confronted by stories of individual anguish. In the face of my own suffering of a bipolar disorder, I've found myself asking: "How can I say thanks?" "Why would I say thanks?" "For what would I say thanks?" Sometimes I've gotten stuck in the question: "If God is love and all powerful, why is there so much suffering?"

I don't pretend to have a comprehensive quick fix answer for these seeming imponderables; however, I have found a place for thanksgiving. I have found that my attitude is critical to realizing optimal spiritual, mental, emotional and physical health potential. My attitude can and does, all too quickly, go sour and negative. I've found that working at cultivating and maintaining an attitude of gratitude by the practice of thanksgiving (giving thanks) is a great attitude adjustment remedy. When I give thanks as a gift of love to another, in that moment I'm not stuck on me. Being a river bed channel by which love passes to another means that love is passing as a healing through me and its overflow is quite therapeutic. Chronic life challenges, including mental health challenges, tend to weary and lower my threshold for anger, bitterness, and resentment and even tempt despair. When as a result of looking without and within for what I can be thankful for I choose to give thanks; I find in that process meaningfulness. I cannot do everything, but I can do something and thanksgiving is something I can do!

Helen Keller is famously quoted as having said: "I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something; and because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do something that I can do." I may not be able to answer all of my in-the-moment pain-inducing "why" questions, but by way of thanksgiving, I've kept from being buried by my experiences with pain, suffering and the many temptations to live a bitter life and be a quitter.

Personal Thanksgiving Choices:

1. I choose to never give thanks in denial of present pain, suffering and horror facts—neither mine nor those of another. Compassion for self and others is born of identification and not denial (Philippians 4:4-9).
2. I choose to give thanks for resources as coming down from Above and Beyond myself so as not to limit myself to myself as my only resource (Psalm 14:1; 53:1; James 1:17).
3. I choose to look to my left and to my right to see what resources have been provided, no matter how small and insignificant. For these resources I give thanks and bless them that they might prosper (Ephesians 5:20).
4. I choose to have a pattern and example for my practice of thanksgiving. Jesus of Nazareth gave thanks for whatever the provision (even when it seemed meager, limited—not enough) and in the blessing of it, he anticipated that it would serve beyond typical expectation (Matthew 15:36; Mark 6:41).

Source: Tim Reside is the President of Bright Tomorrows and has been active in pastoral ministry since the early 1970's. Tim holds a M.A. in Practical Theology from Oral Roberts University. He has been successfully coping with and overcoming bipolar illness since 1979.

TEN Tips FOR BEATING THE Holiday Blues

Thanksgiving, Christmas and the celebration of New Years suggest that this time of the year should be full of joy and cheer. However, this is also a stressful time of year and for those living with certain mental health challenges such stress can trigger distress, depression and health challenges. This is also true for many who have suffered crisis, grief, and loss events during the holiday seasons of the past.

***Bright Tomorrows' Tim Peterson has put together ten tips to help us
with our response to the potential stress of the season:***

- 1 Keep expectations manageable. Don't try to make this holiday season "the best ever." Set realistic goals for yourself, prioritize the most important activities, and pace yourself. Remember that the holidays don't automatically dispel reasons for feeling sad or lonely, so it's okay for you to have these feelings.
- 2 Let go of the past. Don't make yourself miserable by thinking everything has to be just like the "good old days." As life brings changes, each holiday season is different and should be enjoyed in its own way.
- 3 Deal with problems before they arise. Talking things out always helps. Couples sometimes struggle with deciding which side of the family to spend the holidays with but you need to be clear with each other about what's best for you. And if you're anxious about a family gathering, discuss your fears and concerns up front. Prior to the holiday, make a phone call or drop a note saying you're looking forward to seeing them, but are concerned about it.
- 4 Enjoy holiday activities that are free. Drive around to look at holiday decorations. Go window-shopping without buying anything. Be sure to check out the Christmas pageants put on by local churches and schools.
- 5 Don't overindulge. Excessive eating and drinking will only make you more depressed. Maintain a consistent sleep schedule, a balanced diet, and regular exercise.
- 6 Enjoy time with supportive people who care about you. If you're married, spend time at home with your spouse and children. If you're single, enjoy the company of family and friends. If you're alone, reach out to make new friends or contact an old friend with whom you've lost touch.
- 7 Make time for yourself. Don't spend all your time providing activities for family and friends. Whether it's taking a long walk or reading a good book, do something you enjoy.
- 8 Build your own family traditions. Along with making nice memories, family traditions enrich family identity and closeness which helps reduce stress. There are dozens of fun and inexpensive ways to celebrate the season. So don't be afraid to try something new.
- 9 Serve others without expecting a reward. Although we know our real reward comes in heaven, many of us still expect some recognition for our service. The best cure for that is to serve someone outside your circle of acquaintances who has no visible means of repaying you or publicly applauding you.
- 10 Remember Jesus is the reason for the season. Don't let shopping malls and pretty lights distract you from the best part of Christmas – getting to know Christ better. Make a commitment to spend time with Him in Bible study, prayer and worship. Keeping Christ first in Christmas is the best way to cure anxiety and transform your holiday into a joyous celebration of hope.

Tim Peterson serves as a member of the Bright Tomorrows Executive Board and is a Licensed Marital and Family Therapist and a Licensed Professional Counselor. He works at Laureate Clinic in Tulsa.

MISSION UPDATE REPORT

BT continues to offer bi-monthly **Continental Breakfast Seminars** for professional and/or lay ministers and ministry leaders at no charge. For more information, please phone, email or check our website.

BT's Board Trustee, Tim Peterson, LPC, LMFT, April 30th presentation, **How Emotions Work**, presented a simple model and skill set that he employs in his practice to assist clients with the management of their own emotions. The presentation of model was not only informative but the practical take-home skill for the attendees was of high value.

BT's Board Trustee, Tim Peterson, LPC, LMFT, June 25th presentation, **The Science of Happiness**, aptly followed up on his April 30th presentation. Within the field of psychology, new human behavioral insights are being gleaned and are affecting the way counselors conceptualize problems, set their goals, and even how they go about helping clients grow and change. Much of what science is discovering dovetails well with biblical principals. Tim presented four key findings having to do with increasing levels of happiness and contentment that were relevant to

the life of those in attendance as well as practical for sharing with their congregations.

BT's August 27th presentation by Dale R. Doty, PhD, founder and director of the Christian Family Institute in Tulsa, Oklahoma, was entitled: **The New Face of Sex and Internet Obsession**. While traditionally the problems people get into on the internet have been connected to internet pornography, Dr. Doty presented information about new technologies that are opening up new ways for people to get into trouble, including descriptions and examples of facebook and sexting. Doty shared from out of his professional experience with clients that these activities are proving addictive and inducing of compulsive behavior leading to self-destructing lifestyle that equally begins to negatively destroy relationships. The presentation included an outlining of technologies, habits, treatment strategies and positive internet resources.

BT's October 29th presenter was **Bright Tomorrows Speaker Bureau** volunteer speaker, Stuart Holderness, Ph.D. Stuart was diagnosed with Attention Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) as a

child and has had to learn to manage how his brain is wired. Stuart addressed the subject of Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) as one uniquely acquainted with the challenge personally, both as a survivor and as one who became professionally qualified in the field. Stuart has spent years as a Coach to ADD/ADHD children and their parents. It is a very rare church congregation where children and their parents are not dealing with and suffering the challenges of ADD/ADHD. All pastors and ministers in attendance were benefited by Dr. Holderness' keen insights.

BT is currently offering: (1) a weekly **Christian Depression and Bipolar Support Group** for adults that incorporates education and support for the person learning to manage their disorder within the context of their faith where scriptural encouragement and prayer are utilized; (2) a monthly **Educational Series for Caregivers & Support Group Participants**; (3) a Tuesday evening **Family-to-Family Consultation Session**—by appointment only; (4) a bi-monthly **Breakfast Seminar** for professional and/or lay ministers

and ministry leaders—at no charge; and (5) a **Speakers Bureau** that provides qualified speakers for mental health education programs. For more information, please phone, email or check our website.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED:

We are in need of a professionally-styled portable display board unit for use in our educational forums. The cost would be approximately \$500. If you or your organization would be able to make a tax-deductible donation to meet this need, please contact us. Thank you for your consideration.

BT TOP TWO NEEDS:

1. **BT PRAYER PARTNERS!**
2. **BT SUPPORT PARTNERS!**

*Thank You...
For Caring & Sharing!*



"WITH THANKSGIVING LET YOUR REQUESTS BE KNOWN..."

PHILIPPIANS 4:6

Thanks to all who are continuing to generously support the important mission of Bright Tomorrows!

If you have not supported this mission in the past, would you consider doing so today?

_____ Platinum Donors (\$5,000)	Monthly: _____\$10 _____\$25 _____\$50
_____ Gold Donors (\$1,000)	One-Time: _____\$100 _____\$200 _____\$300
_____ Silver Donors (\$500)	Other: _____

Please make checks payable to "Bright Tomorrows." We are a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation and all gifts are tax-deductable. You will receive an end-of-the-year letter of receipt.

SPECIAL NOTE

We send this newsletter to family and friends that we think are interested in the on-going growth of Bright Tomorrows. If, however, you would like to be removed from our mailing list, please contact us either by phone, mail or e-mail. Contact information provided on last page of this publication.

Broken Mosaics & Healing Wholeness

I heard about a lady who visited the United Nations and there saw the Norman Rockwell mosaic, The Golden Rule, which former First Lady Nancy Reagan had presented on behalf of the United States. [See: Mosaic Definition below.] The lady was grieving the brokenness of her family who had suffered a life-impacting tragic accident. Her mother heart longed to fix this.

While gazing at the mosaic a truth suddenly dawned. She realized that the Venetian artisans had crafted this mosaic by piecing together seemingly disconnected pieces into a pattern based upon and reflective of what already existed as a whole and perfected image on a Rockwell canvas. She saw in that moment that each seemingly separate piece in the mosaic was infused with life and meaning by virtue of it having a relationship to the pre-existent image of wholeness. As a final revelation, it dawned upon her that if she were to presumptuously and/or prematurely try to pick up the pieces of her broken life and that of her family in an attempt to fix things, she would only, metaphorically speaking, cut her hands. That day she determined: (1) to hold fast to a vision of love and wholeness for her family in the midst of their brokenness; (2) to rediscover that vision anew each day; and (3) to anticipate that her healing vision of wholeness and not brokenness would be ultimately defining.

Regardless of what is the cause to your present feeling of brokenness, whether tragedy, crisis, the grieving of loss, stress, injury and/or illness, may I suggest seven guidelines for thought? [See: Sources below.]

1. *Don't deny your brokenness but rather recognize your brokenness.*
2. *Have compassion for your brokenness.* Everyone is broken in some way.
3. *Understand your brokenness.* Become informed and educated in hope-inspiring ways.
4. *Find meaning (reasons to survive) in your brokenness.* Meaning engenders survival stamina and brings about hope for the future.
5. *Move on with your brokenness.* What you begin to do in response to what is has a lot to do with determining what is next in the improving upon of your life's story.
6. *Transcend your brokenness.* Search out nurturing and enhancing (inner life) spiritual development opportunities that do not deny present pain, suffering and therapeutic realities.
7. *Share your brokenness*—don't try to go it alone. We truly need each other and others need us.

Mosaic Definition: A mosaic is a composite picture or decorative design made by setting small colored pieces, as of stone or tile, into a surface. Sometimes smaller and different pictures are placed together in such a way that one can distinguish both the smaller individual pictures but step back and see that they are fitted together in such a way as to reveal a bigger picture.

Source: The progressive seven-step outline and the italicized parts of the statements are taken from pages 3-5 of Terry Taylor's book entitled *A Spirituality for Brokenness: Discovering Your Deepest Self In Difficult Times* and published by Skylight Paths Publishing.
Tim Reside, President of Bright Tomorrows, assumes responsibility for the rest of the article.



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Christian Depression and Bipolar Support Group

Thursday Evenings from 7:00-8:30 P.M.

This weekly event is held at Evangelistic Temple Church in the Fireside Room on the 2nd floor of the Family Life Center. E.T. is located at 5345 South Peoria Avenue • Tulsa, Oklahoma.

For a detailed map and complete driving directions please visit our web site.

*To receive this free newsletter please call or e-mail us,
or visit our website. We can also send this to you via
e-mail when you provide us with your e-mail address.*