

The Ice Breaker

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Montana reports light at the end of the meth tunnel

Montana used to be the state that was an example of how bad meth use could get. Once ranked the fifth-worst in the nation for meth use, the state now ranks 39th, with teen use down 45 percent and adult use down 70 percent.

What precipitated that miracle? Experts point to the Montana Meth Project. Conceived and founded by businessman Thomas M. Siebel, the Meth Project was introduced as the Montana Meth Project in 2005.

The Project's core message is "Not Even Once[®]" a reference to meth's highly addictive properties.

The Meth Project bombarded the state with advertising via television, radio, billboards, print, and the Internet from September 2005 through September 2007. Visit the website at: <http://www.montanameth.org/> to see these powerful and thought-provoking ads. The ads are graphic, stark portrayals of the consequences of meth use, things no one thinks of when they first try drugs. One memorable television spot shows a teen selling his girlfriend into prostitution for meth money, which serves as a sober message to both sexes about the lengths to which one might go to supply an addiction.

The Meth Project sustained a statewide prevention campaign which included: 45,000 TV ads, 35,000 radio ads, 10,000 print impressions, and 1,000 billboards. The group also partnered with HBO Films to create a documentary called "Montana Meth". (For more information on the Meth Project, go to <http://www.methproject.org/> where one can view the ads, learn more about the Project, and find out how to help.)

Steve Pasierb, president and CEO of the Partnership for a Drug-Free America, likens it to the "unselling" of a product. Just as consumers can be encouraged to buy a product through advertising, they can be encouraged to avoid it. Especially with the powerful ads produced by the Meth Project. The Montana project has been so successful that six other states have adopted it, including Arizona, Illinois, and Idaho (Idaho Gov. C.L. "Butch" Otter announced the states adoption of the program during his January State of the State address.)

Another factor in the decline of meth use is federal programs aimed at reducing meth production, such as limiting sales of products containing pseudoephedrine. Law enforcement agencies are also changing some of their practices; enforcement efforts are more systematic, placing greater focus on disrupting supply lines, going after dealers, and pushing for longer sentences. The supply squeeze has created a meth shortage, which has almost doubled its street price.

Making meth harder to get is only one part of the solution, however. Drug cartels outside the United States are making far too much money on the drug to be discouraged from exporting it in any way they can.

As Moms and Dads Against Meth has been saying for the past four years, the only truly successful way to eliminate meth from the culture is to eliminate the market for it through education and emphasis on recovery. The Montana Meth Project, with its straightforward look at the many pitfalls of meth use is doing a terrific job of steering would-be consumers away from a deadly choice.

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UPCOMING EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Garage Sale!

May 2 and 3

8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

336 N. Washington Ave.

St. Croix Falls, Wisconsin

Shop 'til you drop at the first annual Butterfly House Garage Sale! People donate the nicest merchandise to the Butterfly House, and we're excited to share it with the public.

Highway Cleanup!

May 10

9 a.m.

County Rds. C and CC (near Cedar Lake Speedway)
Star Prairie, Wisconsin

Ahh, there's no better way to enjoy a spring day than taking a walk . . . and what better way to enjoy a walk than to pick up a few things along the way (so what if the things are garbage? You're outside after a long, cold winter!). Join us, please! (There's a cookout after this event, if that sweetens the deal for you!)

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Crystal Methamphetamine Hell

You think it's bad now . . . It will only get worse.

If you did it like I did it . . . You don't do it, *it does you*.

Thank God I survived and my story I'll tell.

Haven't we all had a part in the play "Crystal Methamphetamine Hell"?

Ah, what can I say? I'm glad to be back! Been gone for years,
off running with the pack.

Well, let's see . . . I've lost a house, a home, my kids, a car and a truck, a really good job or two, a good life and now my health is not good.

HAD TO HAVE THAT METH!

Guess I'm living proof that there is life after death, or meth. Oh yea, there's more. Let's don't stop until we tally the score.

There are scars on my body, and scars on my heart (not to mention a few bruises and black eyes).

Meth causes that you know, fights and lies.

Yeah I played the part well . . . Had the lead role in "Crystal Methamphetamine Hell".

Who knows what life could have been . . .

No sunrises, no sunsets . . . Missed that for sure, when you don't sleep for years because meth is the cure.

Yeah, it doesn't cure you. It kills you and puts you behind bars. Pretty soon you see people following you . . . Often switching cars . . . Then in

the air. . . Then you hear them talking when no one is there—fear is always near!

Coffee, breakfast, lunch, snack and dinner. You cook it, snort it, shoot it, eat it, drink it, buy it, sell it, and give it away . . . Sometimes all day long for days and days, then it's been years!

Finally, you're sick of it and say, "What have I done? I have no friends, no family, no life no job, no money, no clothes, no home, no car, no food, no future . . . And this is supposed to be fun?"

There is NOTHING good about meth, believe me it's true! All that it is; is a foundation for failure and destruction in everything you do.

Don't ever try it. Stop now, if you can. Ask Jesus to help you, He has the plan.

The next thing you know, good things will happen. You'll be a good person and have new friends.

Best of all you'll have eternal life after death, instead of living life in hell all strung out on meth.

To the Butterfly House
From "Just a Friend"

Word of the Month: life

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.

It is spring, and it feels as if everything is being reborn after the untimely death of winter. Trees bud, early spring flowers, such as the crocus, delight the gardener anxious to see some color rise from the dull ground. The birds sing more joyously than at any other time of year, and the morning air rings with their songs. All of nature is singing a song of life. In that spirit, it's only right that I share with you my favorite poem and the prayer I say every morning.

i thank You God for most this amazing
day:for the leaping greenly spirits of trees
and a blue true dream of sky;and for everything
which is natural which is infinite which is yes

(i who have died am alive again today,
and this is the sun's birthday;this is the birth
day of life and of love and wings;and of the gay
great happening illimitably earth)

how should tasting touching hearing seeing

Got Anger?

"It's like you're putting the bubble (meth pipe) right in my hand!" she screamed.

Caught in a lie (a web of them, in fact), the young woman in recovery was frightened and angry, so she lashed out with what she thought would make her caregivers back off—a threat to return to drugs.

It was a symptom of her disease and a signal to the caregivers that she had been stuffing her real feelings away, putting a sunny disposition over an angry spirit. After she had calmed down, her caregivers worked to help her understand why anger is so dangerous for addicts. People in addiction seem to thrive on anger, getting what could be described as "high" on it (and often getting high "because of it"). Addicts take anger out on themselves by using drugs or other destructive behavior, even though they feel it is someone else who is at fault. It's often a cry for help, but it isn't often recognized as one.

Anger is a normal emotion; a primitive signal for "fight or flight" if threatened. We all would do well to understand it, face it, and control it. Childhood experiences, family dynamics, and even a little heredity can make some people more prone to anger and less able to deal with it effectively.

We need to learn to ask ourselves these questions: Why am I feeling angry? (Look deeply into the situation and be honest. Do you feel threatened, afraid, excited?) Who or what am I really angry at? (all too often, the honest answer will be "myself" although you find it easier to blame someone else). What does it do when I lash out at others? What can I do to assuage the anger or fix what it is that is making me feel angry?

Of course, by the time you get through giving in-depth answers to all those questions, you might not feel the anger anymore (and maybe that's the point!).

Anger is often the result of resentment, and resentment is often the result of stuffing away (or sandbagging) of your feelings.

Out of a need to please, a fear of hurting someone, an inability to express feelings, many people push their little resentments down below the surface, rather than dealing with them head on. This is about as effective as trying to push dozens of ping pong balls to the bottom of a bucket of water—some will inevitably slip back to the surface, no matter what you do.

As those little resentments emerge, they will likely be disguised in sarcasm or a caustic remark. Those who are closest to us can often sense when we are angry, but if we don't tell them why we feel as we do, they will harbor their own resentment and pull away from us. (Mama's not happy, and she's banging the cupboards and pots and pans, but no one knows who or what upset her. Everyone retreats to their own rooms, and even Daddy finds a reason to step out for awhile. Mama's sandbagging her feelings and the rest of the family has to deal with the flood.)

Many people have been stuffing their feelings away for so long, they no longer have an accurate way to gauge them. Impatience, a short temper, inability to concentrate, and even physical symptoms such as headaches and stomach pain can often be traced to unrecognized anger.

Dealing with anger directly is a learned behavior, but one that will suit us well in life. A quiet word with a child or a spouse could save a screaming match later.

The thing is, anger often pops up suddenly, and we think there's no time to stop and analyze what we're feeling and where those feelings are likely to take us. Below are a few hints to fend off a huge blow-up:

Take a deep breath. It's a cliché, and we all think it's dumb and we hate when people tell us to do it, but it does help us calm down in a hurry (and if it doesn't, keep taking slow, deep breaths until it does).

Get out. Try to calmly extricate yourself from the situation that's making you angry. "Can we discuss this later?" is good in most situations, but remember that *you will* eventually have to address the situation. Even if you take just a minute away to shake off the anger, splash cold water on your face, or give yourself a pep talk, you will be better able to solve the problem when you come back to the discussion.

Stick to the facts. "You always ..." and "You never ..." are fighting words. Leave "you" out of it, and tell the other person how "I" feel. "I feel put-down when I hear ..." or "I get scared when I'm confronted," are better ways to state your feelings. Be as clear as you can be, so the other person can know how you feel and even make amends, if warranted.

Stay in the time zone: It is counterproductive for you and the person you're upset with if you fire off a laundry-list of complaints from a week or a month ago. Stick to dealing with what the problem is right now.

What set it off? Learn what triggers you respond to angrily: hate being contradicted? Have a difficult time taking criticism? Don't like being told what to do? Don't understand something . . . Your list could go on and on (and if it does, you might have to address *why so many things make you angry*). When you learn what triggers set off your anger, you'll be in a better position to cope with it.

Journal it. There is no better way to deal with being angry at yourself than to write yourself a letter explaining why you're angry. It sounds silly and condescending, but it gets the feelings out, puts them in a concrete form you can refer to later, and it beats yelling at yourself (something other people in your life might find disturbing).

If you absolutely, positively cannot directly deal with the situation or person that is making you angry, journaling is the next best thing. Vent your frustrations, your pain, and your fear so that they don't boil over in anger and cause you to hurt yourself or others.

Know your enemy. Addiction is a disease that could almost be a living entity: it fights to stay alive, it defends itself with denial, and it uses anger as a tool to keep itself attached to its victim. Addiction also relies on emotional upheaval to keep the addict in a constant state of needing to use, using, or finding the next fix, so depression, drama, resentment, and anger can keep that cycle going. People in recovery need to use honesty, patience, and even a little grace to keep anger from getting the best of them. (Now that I think of it, we all should take that advice!)