

Breathing Under Water

No matter how turbulent the tumult



Bill Guy

*Board Chairperson
Parents Helping Parents, Inc.*

Breathing Under Water

"I built my house by the sea.
Not on the sands, mind you;
not on the shifting sand.
And I built it of rock.
A strong house
by a strong sea.
And we got well acquainted, the sea and I.
Good neighbors.
Not that we spoke much.
We met in silences.
Respectful, keeping our distance,
but looking our thoughts across the fence of sand.
Always, the fence of sand our barrier,
always, the sand between.
And then one day,
-and I still don't know how it happened -
the sea came.
Without warning.

Without welcome, even
Not sudden and swift, but a shifting across the sand like
wine,
less like the flow of water than the flow of blood.
Slow, but coming.
Slow, but flowing like an open wound.
And I thought of flight and I thought of drowning and I
thought of death.
And while I thought the sea crept higher, till it reached
my door.
And I knew, then, there was neither flight, nor death,
nor drowning.
That when the sea comes calling, you stop being
neighbors,
Well acquainted, friendly-at-a-distance neighbors,
And you give your house for a coral castle,
And you learn to breathe underwater."

— *Breathing Under Water* (Sr. Carol Bialock, RSCJ)

Chris — Our story



"Sometimes reality is too complex. Stories give it form."

— Jean Luc Godard, film writer, film critic, film director

Self-Care Is Not Self-Indulgence

*When you take care of your needs,
the people you care for will benefit, too.*

Service in the absence of self-care
is an act of self-destruction.

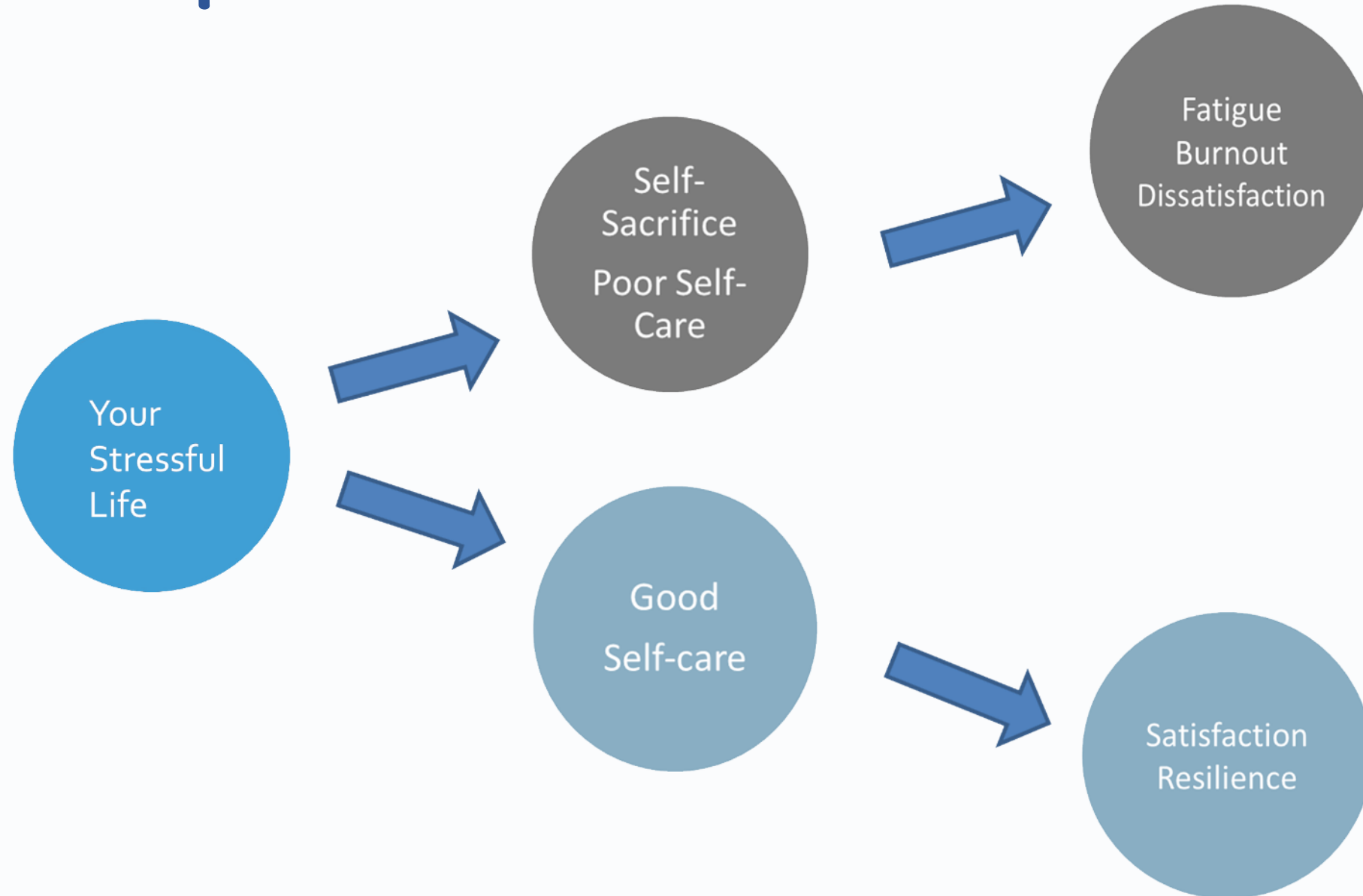
Focusing on the self
in the absence of service sustains
the narcissistic self-encapsulation
that is the very hallmark of addiction.

Ironically, we must tend to self to serve others
and serve others to escape entrapment within the self.

Balancing self-care and service to others is the great challenge
of recovery advocacy and peer recovery support.

— *William L. White*
Emeritus Senior Research Consultant
Chestnut Health Systems

The Importance of Self Care



Stress Manifestations

Behavioral and emotional manifestations

- Anger
- Indecisiveness
- Critical of self and others
- Mood swings between anger and anxiety
- Fear
- Panic attacks

Intellectual manifestations

- Forgetfulness
- Lack of awareness
- Lack of focus
- Inability to concentrate

Physical manifestations

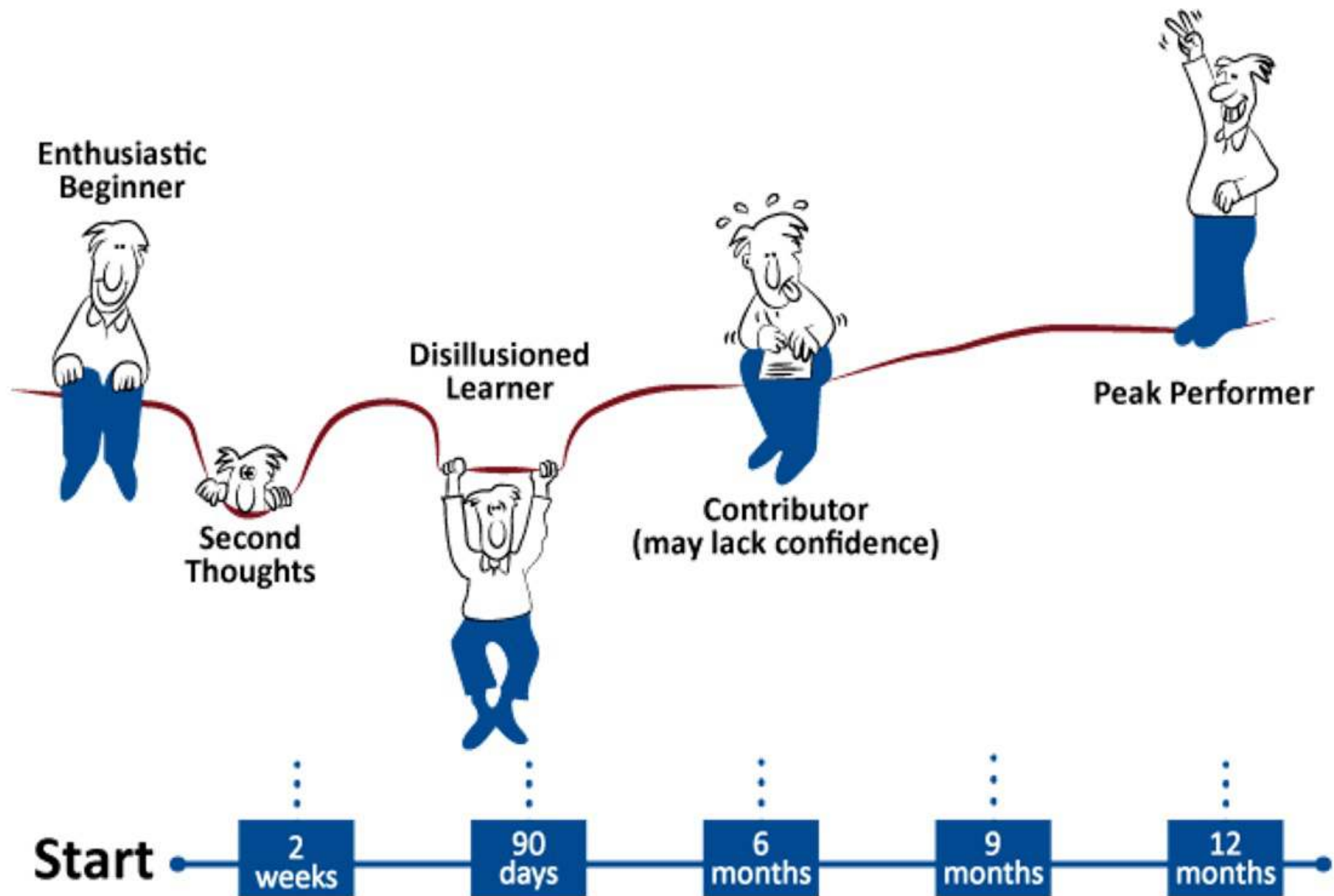
- Headache
- Dizziness
- Heart palpitations
- Shortness of breath
- Nausea or vomiting

As you focus on your child, taking care of your self may fall to the bottom of your list, if it make the list at all.

This impulse to suspend paying attention to your own health and happiness is understandable but is likely to cause more problems than you realize if it causes you be reactive, anxious or easily frustrated.

Without attention to your own needs, you risk collapsing before you manage to help. Even if you stay standing, you won't be able to think, plan, act and troubleshoot as effectively as you can when your health, optimistic and resilient.

Helping a child change relationship to substances will likely be a long-term project that's better approached as a marathon rather than a sprint. You'll need to keep up your energy reserves and pace yourself.



In *Recovery Rising*, William L. White describes four daily rituals that are essential for sustained addiction recovery and effective recovery advocacy.

The first three of these daily rituals constitute the essential foundation for the fourth.

1. Centering rituals, whether in the form of prayer, formal meditation, or just quiet reflection, help us “keep our eyes on the prize,” remain grounded, and help narrow the gap between aspirational recovery values (humility, honesty, integrity, tolerance, gratitude, forgiveness, etc.) and our daily actions.
2. Mirroring rituals allow us to commune with kindred spirits for mutual support, for feedback on the quality of our advocacy work, and to rekindle our passion for recovery and recovery advocacy.
3. Acts of self-care and personal responsibility allow time for self-repair and caring for the needs of our families and others of importance in our lives.

THE SELF-CARE ICEBERG

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WHAT WE "THINK"
SELF-CARE LOOKS LIKE
(WHAT WE "SEE")

EXERCISE

BUBBLE BATHS

SKIN CARE SPA DAYS MESSAGES

TRAUMA HEALING

PURGING NEGATIVITY

INNER CHILD HEALING

CRYING/FEELING EMOTIONS

SETTING BOUNDARIES

GETTING PROPER REST

LETTING GO OF ATTACHMENTS

MEDITATION

DIFFICULT
CONVERSATIONS

LEARNING FROM
TRIGGERS

NOURISHING YOUR
BODY

WHAT SELF-CARE
REALLY LOOKS LIKE
BEHIND THE SCENES

Self Care Recommendations

- Setting good boundaries
- Recognizing strengths and vulnerabilities
- Regular exercise, down time, play
- Self awareness of what works for you
- Moderation of caffeine; alcohol
- Healthy eating
- Outlets for creativity
- Focus on small accomplishments: hourly, daily
- Gift yourself on birthdays, holidays, any time
- Create a serene, peaceful space in your home
- Keep your environment organized, clutter free
- Focus on positivity in a journal
- Post a list of what you value or enjoy where you will see it daily
- Nurture your spirit with prayer, meditation, reflection, music, art, reading
- Stop multi-tasking by focusing on one thing at a time
- Work at a reasonable, steady pace; take breaks
- Resist unnecessary overtime
- Try to disconnect, especially for illness, vacation
- Break down complex or difficult tasks into small, achievable parts
- Recognize and celebrate even small victories

You can't pour
from an empty cup.
Take care of
yourself first.



4. We must build our service to others on a foundation of personal healing, if not health.

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