

Your Wellness

Strategies for Mental Health, Career, and Family Success

Issue 121 February 2025

Ciara Crandon-Marsh, M.S., LLPC, Coordinator, Communication/Marketing



Recco Santee Richardson, Ph.D., LPC

Dr. Recco's Corner

With life comes trouble! Be it small troubles or big ones, it is only a matter of time before trouble knocks at our door. I wish we could pre-register for our troubles, or select when they come, but we can't. As such, the next best thing we can do is be prepared for the day of trouble.

Preparation is the key to success and for weathering the storms and troubles of life. It is preparation that helps us keep our perspective. It allows us to dig deeper and call upon the resolve that has carried us through tough times before.

With all that is within me, I feel that now is the time to be prepared for every, and anything that may come our way. With a little planning, foresight, faith, hope, and anticipation, we can lessen the blow and impact of the troubles that come to sway our conviction and change our path. Speaking for myself, had I been better prepared in 2011, the financial crisis that hit our nation from 2008-2012 would not have blasted me so hard.

This is not a doomsday cry or a Chicken Little shout. Rather, it is an encouragement to all that will hear, to prepare for what may come, prepare for things to not work out like planned, prepare for a change in plans, and prepare for things to fall apart. I'm not sure why we fail to prepare and set ourselves to be at our best when life and unfortunate situations befalls us.

Surely, being prepared lessens the blow and builds character in us. We grow stronger by successfully enduring and lifting the weight of troubles. Yes, it can be done and has been done by so many people.

I'm prepared as much as I can be. Are you prepared? I'm ready for what may or may not come my way. Are you ready too? I'm ready to grow and increase like never before. Are you ready to do the same thing?

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There is Always More to the Story

By: Roger Huntley, Education Major & Behavior Specialist

Well, here we are at the end of the second month of the new year. The shortest month of the year with only 28 days most years. February has been designated as “Black History Month.” One of the ironies of this is, how can you fit all Black History in just 28 short days, or even 29 for that matter? There is no way that everything can be covered. However, as a starting point we can look at some important aspects of Black History and the struggle for freedom just in the United States and primarily in the 20th century.

We will look at some important people such as W. E. B. DuBois, Ida B. Wells, Marcus Garvey, and Malcolm X. These are just a few of many people who played a part in advancing America and Black freedom and equality. W. E. B DuBois was the author of “The Souls of Black Folk,” the first Black American to obtain a PhD from Harvard University, and a founding member of the NAACP, (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People).

In his book, Dubois discussed a phenomenon he called “Double-Consciousness.” He describes it as, “One ever feels his twoness, An American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder”^[1]. This one sentence says a lot. It tells how a Black person knows who they are, and what they are capable of. Yet, in a mostly white society, they must act and conduct themselves in a certain way. If they don’t, they could risk their very lives.

Ida B. Wells was an amazing woman. There are many things she accomplished towards freedom and equality. She is known as being in the first generation of civil rights activists. She is the subject of a wonderful book entitled, “They Say,” written by James West Davidson. He tells in the book how Ida Wells refused to be seated in the segregated car of a train. Ida refused to sit in a segregated car simply because she was Black.

There was room in the car which was labeled for whites only. The accommodation was better in the other car, and she fought for the right to sit there. She won this battle and was granted the right to sit there. She is mostly remembered now as an anti-lynching activist, writer, and lecturer.^[2]

Marcus Garvey, a beautiful, barrel chested, Black man born in Kingston, Jamaica. At age 28 he became well known after founding the organization known as U.N.I.A. (Universal Negro Improvement Association). He started a weekly newspaper titled, “The Negro World.” The paper was the official word from the U.N.I.A, and it had worldwide circulation.^[3]

There are several particularly good books written about Marcus Garvey and the U.N.I.A. Two very inspiring works are “Black Moses: The Story of Marcus Garvey and The Universal Negro Improvement Association,” by E. David Cronon, and “Negro with a Hat: The Rise and Fall of Marcus Garvey,” by Colin Grant. Both books are very inspiring and chronicle his successes as well as his losses.

“Greatness knows and
has no limitations.”
Dr. Recco

¹(NAACP 2025)

² (Barnes and Noble 2025)

³ (American Experience 2025)

⁴ (American Experience 2025)

Malcolm X was born Malcolm Little, in Omaha, Nebraska. Malcolm's father, Earl Little, was a member of Marcus Garvey's UNIA. By 1928 the Little family had moved to Lansing, Michigan. They lived in Lansing, endured many hardships, and had many racist actions taken against them. In September 1931, Earl Little was brutally slain by a White Supremacist Group. This put Malcolm on the path to becoming an outspoken and militant civil rights leader and freedom fighter. While incarcerated, he became associated with, "The Nation of Islam," and the Honorable Elijah Muhammad.

In 1957 Malcolm became the leader of the Nation of Islam Temple Number 7 in Harlem, New York. He was assassinated in Harlem, New York in 1965 while he was delivering a speech. He was shot three times.^[1] An interesting book which details the life of Malcolm X, is "The Autobiography of Malcolm X: as told to Alex Haley," Written by Alex Haley. It is a complete life story of Malcolm, which details the hardships and triumphs that occurred during his short but inspiring life. It is an exceptionally good and worthwhile read for anyone with an interest

in the Civil Rights movement or simply an interest in history.



There is a Professor at Saginaw Valley State University, Dr. Kenneth Jolly, who stated that, “When studying any subject, you should always end your course with more questions than answers.” This statement has never been truer than when studying and trying to understand the Black Freedom Struggle and the Civil Rights

Movement. The more you learn, the more you want to learn. The more questions you will have. The more answers you want to obtain, and then more questions will arise. This writing is not to say that the Civil Rights movement is over. It is continuing today and will continue to go on so long as there are racial injustices and inequalities that need to be addressed. It is a lifelong pursuit of short-term goals for long-term results.

The United States of America was built on the back of enslaved Black people. They were unpaid laborers, many of which were taken by force from their original homeland. Resistance was always the key to their survival. They kept in mind freedom and equality. Many people rose to the occasion to fight for what they believed in and to change the way Black people were treated in society.

The people mentioned, W.E.B DuBois, Ida B. Wells, Marcus Garvey, and Malcolm X, are just a few of the many who decided they had enough. Civil Rights is still an ongoing issue today. One day we will have true equality and freedom for all, but in the meanwhile some special people will always stand up and say enough is enough.

Inspiring Quotes

The way to right wrongs is to turn the light of the truth upon them. – Ida B. Wells

We need more light about each other. Light creates understanding, understanding creates love, love creates patience, and patience creates unity. – Malcolm X

**"Someone has to answer
the call to leadership."**

Dr. Recco

Therapist Spotlight

Featuring: Amber Crandon, BS, Master's Level Counseling Intern



Amber Crandon

BS, Master's Level Counseling Intern

"Amber has added quality and strength to our clinic. She has all the tools to be a successful therapist."

Dr. Recco

Amber Crandon is the Therapist Spotlight for the month of February. She is a Master's Level Counseling Intern here at Recco S. Richardson Consulting (RSRC). Currently, she is a full-time student at the University of the Cumberland's. Amber started her internship in January of 2024 and has thrived since the beginning. Upon graduating, she plans to stay on at RSRC as a full-time contractual therapist. She has always been creative but was unsure how to apply it in her career. After a lot of thought, she decided on the counseling career path. During her internship, she wants to incorporate art therapy interventions into her sessions. Having an art background makes her a unique therapist in that it can help clients express themselves and attract new clients to her. Currently, her caseload consists of children and teens. However, she is willing to see all ages. Amber is motivated to help others which is a quality we need in our helping profession.

1. Why is it important to do the right thing and how does it benefit your clients?

Amber reported she has always been of the belief that we should constantly try to do the right thing in life. She feels this way because doing so can help create a sense of purpose in life. Amber finds that doing the right thing makes her feel good about who she is as a person and what she can do. On the other hand, people who do things that feel wrong to them may see negative effects on their mental health. The wrongness can cause them to become weighed down with guilt, or even shame, and they may do things that get them into serious trouble. The benefit of doing the right thing heavily outweighs the difficulty that may come with doing wrong. Amber has found that the benefits include an increased sense of fulfillment regarding self and purpose, long-term positive impacts on success, increased trust and credibility, improved relationships, and avoidance of negative consequences.

2. What should a person do if they want to increase their self-esteem and confidence?

Amber offered that for some people, it can feel difficult to increase their self-esteem, confidence, and hope because they are unsure of where to even start the process. There are lots of ways that people can start the process. Firstly, people could set goals regarding what they want to achieve. Having larger overarching goals, such as wanting to increase confidence, can be highly intimidating and it is better to break them down into smaller goals that are easier to accomplish.

Next, they should practice self-compassion, positive self-talk, daily patience, and incorporate positive affirmations into their daily life. If someone only experiences negative mind frames and do not try to reframe their thoughts, it will be hard for them to develop better self-esteem or confidence. Finally, one of the most important things is to be surrounded by people who are positive and encouraging. If surrounded by negative individuals who drag others down, it will be a struggle to increase levels of personal self-esteem, confidence, or hope.

3. Can you share parenting strategies that you often talk with your clients about?

Amber feels that the most important strategy she shares with parents is for them to make sure their child knows that they are loved by them, even in times of frustration and stress. Parents can often become frustrated with their children when they are misbehaving. Often misbehavior can be linked to a child not feeling loved or valued. This can lead to them acting out to gain their parent's attention. It can also lead to them having poor coping skills and inadequate expression of their frustration. For children, it is important that parents express their love for them through physical affection, quality time, verbal affirmations, active listening, and having empathy.

4. Share a few positive affirmations that you often say to yourself and to your clients?

Amber shared several positive affirmations that can be helpful such as: "I am enough, just as I am," "I am open to new opportunities and experiences," "I am in control of my thoughts, and I choose to think positively," "I believe in my dreams and take action toward them every day," "I am deserving of all the love, respect, and kindness I receive," and "I embrace my uniqueness and celebrate my individuality."

5. What tips do you have for clients that have trouble avoiding toxic relationships?

She stated that some clients may feel like they cannot escape toxic relationships and avoiding them can be challenging. Recognizing red flags, setting boundaries, and understanding their own worth are key steps in avoiding toxic relationships. If a client has experienced multiple toxic relationships, they probably now notice red flags, such as controlling and manipulative behaviors, guilt-tripping, gaslighting, constant drama, and a lack of respect. Clients should also think deeply about the boundaries they do not want crossed and stand firm on them even when toxic individuals try to manipulate them. Most importantly clients need to know their own worth, as often people with low self-esteem and self-worth find themselves preyed upon by toxic individuals.

6. How should clients fix relationships with their birth parents, their children, or their ex?

Amber does not think that people need to, or are required, to fix their relationships with the people in their lives. Clients need to acknowledge the past, forgive quickly, and let go of past failures. This is true because a relationship can never truly be fixed if they continue holding grudges over someone's head. This does not mean that the client must forget or even excuse the behaviors, because that is not what this is about. It is instead about helping the client to break the hold that the situation has had over their life and work through their negative emotions. The negative emotions include resentment, anger, fear, agitation, and hurt. It is important that clients realize that the relationship may never be restored to its original state. They have to learn and accept this and be okay with it. Once a client can accept this, they then can work towards improving and creating a healthier relationship with others.

7. What advice do you give clients who just want to quit and give up?

When clients feel like quitting, it is important to acknowledge their feelings and to take things one day at a time, or if it is particularly bad, one minute at a time. Amber stated that sometimes things can feel too overwhelming for clients when they start to think about the future. They can find themselves stressing about everything all at once. She encourages clients to break down their goals into manageable steps, embrace challenges as opportunities for growth, and celebrate small wins. If necessary, she advises them to take a step back and take a break before trying again.

8. Please share with us one of the happiest days of your life.

Amber mentioned how she has had a lot of happy days in her life, all which center around the quality time spent with her family. One of the happiest moments she can think of is her first trip to Disney World with her mom, sister, and grandma. No matter how much Amber and her sister wanted to visit Disney World as children, they never had the money to go. Years later, visiting as grown adults did not take away from the magic of Disney World. They ate lots of good snacks, rode all the rides, took loads of family pictures, and ended their night with the firework show. She can remember watching the fireworks from behind the castle, singing to all the Disney songs and grinning like a fool as she whirled around trying to see all the fireworks that filled the night. She is sure she looked like an absolute child in that moment. It was truly a family memory that she thinks back fondly on.

"For some of us, relationships are the start of something good and the start of something bad."

Dr. Recco

The Need for Self-Care and Art

By: Amber Crandon, Master's Level Counseling Intern

Self-care is a necessary component of life, yet it is often the first thing we put on the backburner when trying to balance our hectic lives. We need to practice self-care for both our mental and physical health. Without self-care we can become overwhelmed, exhausted, riddled with anxiety, and stressed. These experiences can lead to burnout in multiple areas of our life. Burnout can promote several negative experiences such as mental/physical/emotional exhaustion, lack of focus, irritation, emptiness, relationship withdrawal, sleep disturbances, heightened anxiety, levels of depression, and poor memory. If people are continually in the state of burnout the side effects can become more severe. This is why self-care is essential to managing stress and preventing burnout in the first place.

Because we are all unique, often self-care activities look different for everyone. For example, someone may take soothing baths, while another person jogs every morning before work. Both are forms of self-care for these individuals, yet they may not find the same calming benefits in each other's self-care routine. This is why we must choose self-care practices that we feel a connection to. Some examples of self-care include, but are not limited to:

- 1). Exercising or activities such as yoga, running, and dancing.
- 2). Having a balanced and nutritious diet.
- 3). Meditation and mindfulness techniques.
- 4). Journaling and writing.
- 5). Participating in a hobby such as gardening, knitting, and baking.
- 6). Spending time with friends and family.



A form of self-care that many people may not think about is art making. If people are not particularly artsy then utilizing art as a self-care technique may seem silly or never crosses their mind. These individuals may also feel like they do not have any artistic ability and believe that they would be too stressed about making art that looks good.

But art does not have to be about making perfect master pieces that are elaborate. Instead, it can be a way to express and process our feelings in a nonverbal manner, which can be particularly helpful for people who struggle to explore their feelings. Not only that, but art can also help to reduce stress as a result of blocking out

worries. Because they can get lost in the process, some people often find that the art making is a relief. I personally can get lost when making art. When I'm lost it feels like self-care utopia. Art making can also help boost focus, give us a sense of accomplishment, help let go of perfectionism, and enhance our self-esteem.

"We have to take good care of ourselves, we simply just have to."

Dr. Recco

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Recco S. Richardson Consulting, Inc. Deborah Dewey Walker Family Services

Recco S. Richardson, Ph.D., LPC

Rene M. Richardson, CCTP, MSW, LMSW, MBA

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Securing Peace in Life

By: Jackie Ferguson & Recco Santee Richardson, Ph.D., LPC
(Excerpts from the Tried by Trauma Book)

Discussions on peace are important because we need it in our lives. We need to know why it exists and how to deal with it. This is a critical issue in our life and in the world today, because without peace there is only discord or stress surrounding us. As defined, discord is the presence of strife, conflict, contention, dissension, and variance. It is a state of condition marked by a lack of agreement or harmony that frames quarreling, factiousness, or antagonism.

The meaning of stress is the state of personal anxiety, strain or tension resulting from the pressure of human life. When discord and stress are present, it is only a matter of time before they manifest or become the foundation of a traumatic experience. Our motivation for writing on peace comes from seeing and hearing people who have no peace in their souls. We will be sharing biblical principles, and psychological principles on how to obtain peace in life.

With all the things going on in this world today we really need to have guidance on how to achieve peace during trouble and loss. We have noticed during our lifetime that some people go through so many traumas trying to live their life, which robs them of their peace. The trauma of losing someone so dear to you, the trauma of getting pregnant and having a miscarriage after years and years of trying to conceive are just a few of life's traumatic experiences.

"We have noticed during our lifetime people go through so many traumas trying to live their life, which robs them of their peace."

It was reported that 10 percent to 20 percent of women who know they are pregnant will miscarry. We have seen firsthand how traumatic this can be for women. They express that they feel less than a woman, useless and the blame for putting additional strain on their marriage. The trauma of not being able to start a family and please their husband starts to destroy their inner peace and causes a great deal of stress and discord in their family.

We want to share some thoughts as to how to seek peace. Let's start with some definitions and meanings. As you are aware, one of the Greek words for peace is Eirene. It means one, peace, quietness, and rest. In Greek mythology, the goddess Eirene was one of the Horae, the personification of peace. She was depicted in art as a beautiful young woman carrying a cornucopia, scepter, and a torch or rhyton.

One of the Hebrew words for peace is shalom. Shalom was translated in the Septuagint most often as the Greek word Eirene. It has a wide semantic range including the notion of totality or completeness, success, fulfillment, wholeness, harmony, security, and well-being. The spiritual meaning of peace or inner peace is the state of being mentally and spiritually at peace, with enough knowledge and understanding, to keep oneself strong in the face of discord or stress. Being at peace is considered by many to be healthy and the opposite of being stressed or anxious.

There are so many things that come up against us daily that try to keep us from attaining inner peace and peaceful living. The trauma and pain in the world today causes stress and discord amongst people. There are just so many traumatic things that happen in this world and in our lives that brings discord and harmonious imbalance in our life. Peace is important because of the benefits it offers us (see chart #1).

"Trauma does not have
to define us."

Dr. Recco

Chart #1 Benefits of Securing Peace

Makes Things Better	Chaos Is The Absent	Eases Our Mind
Helps Us Achieve	Provides Comfort	Can Guide Us
Is A Source Of Strength	Helps Explain Life	Serves As A Motivator
Cost Us Nothing	Adds Value To Things	Helps Process Struggles
Provides Inspiration	Gives Hope	Can Anchor Us

As individuals, we are supposed to enjoy life and have peace in all areas. If we use peace principles and the wisdom that God gave us, we could be a blessing in our communities and bring about peace and change in a lot of people's lives. Some argue that peace could be considered the closet sensation to our natural base-state of consciousness, contentment, happiness, elation, and joy. The argument has value and should be explored more by those in authority and under authority.

Peace is a feeling and can promote joyful sensations that can intensify when needed. For these and other reasons, peace is important in our life and can lead to true happiness.



True happiness can be achieved by being true to ourselves. The most vital way to achieve peace in our life is to take it to God. God left us scriptures and guidance for all that we go through in our life. So, when we start feeling our peace slipping away, and stress and discord taking over, we can pray to God and read our bible. We can also gird ourselves for the long haul and for the fight of our lives. Our peace is worth every fight.

While gathering information, we came across a Psychology Today article that stated what we can do to secure peace in our lives.

The article and others that we read, shared thoughts such as the followings.

- 1). **Learn:** Learn a new way to think and master a new way of being a peace.
- 2). **Focus:** Focus on what you are learning and not the mistakes and setbacks.
- 3). **Ease Your Expectations:** Life is under no obligation to give you what you want.
- 4). **Trust:** Open up to others and let special people in.
- 5). **Hope:** Use hope to drive positive action.
- 6). **Move:** Move towards something instead of away from it.

"Peace is more
than quietness."

Dr. Recco

7). Step Back: Take a few steps back and see things clearer.

8). Time: Give yourself time and explore life.

When going through traumatic times and moments in life, we should learn to trust our inner feeling and listen to the voice inside of us. We can learn and obtain the peace we are looking for by reading books, meditating, and studying our bible. To secure peace, we must stop expecting so much from other people and depend on ourselves more. We can help ourselves by finding a good support system, confiding in a trusted elder in our church and stop worrying about what others and the world thinks.

As well, we must build up our confidence and never give up on the hope of reaching our peace through positive thinking. There are several other effective ways to secure additional peace (see chart #2).

Chart #2 Additional Ways To Secure Peace

Avoid Toxic People	Seek Wisdom	Try New Things
Keep Your Head Up	Be A Trailblazer	Process Things Quickly
Stand Firm	Be Yourself	Ask Good Questions
Seek To Know	Recognize Opportunity	Be Optimistic
Esteem Honesty	Examine Yourself	Stay Humble
Treat People Right	Preserve The Unity	Let Integrity Win

“There are myriads
of ways to secure more
peace in life.”
Dr. Recco

How to Contact Us

Ciara Crandon-Marsh, M.S, LLPC
Clinical Supervisor
Editor: Your Wellness Newsletter
Coordinator, Communication/Marketing

Recco Santee Richardson, Ph.D., LPC
Clinical Therapist, Author, Trainer, Educator

Recco S. Richardson Consulting, Inc.
3456 Pierson Place, Suite A, B & C
Flushing, MI 48433
(810) 394-7815

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