



By Andrew Martin, MBA, CADIC II, SAP

It is spring time, a time when so many make the annual effort to clean out the old items shoved back in closets and cabinets that will never be used again. I propose we use this time to take an inventory of some other, more important, components in our lives and do some spring cleaning there as well.

Our psychological health requires effort on our part, especially when there is a history of alcohol, drug, or other addictive behavior in our lives. The health of our mind begins with understanding where we are at in this moment. We need an accurate and clear sense of our psyche. This is often achieved with the assistance of self-help groups and therapists because it is so difficult to get a truthful perspective on ourselves without input from people on the outside helping us to understand those parts of us that we are not disclosing to ourselves. The Johari window is often used to explain how our self-awareness can be portrayed as a quadrant:

1. My Openness represents those things that I know about myself, and that I have disclosed to others around me.
2. My Blindspots represents those things that I do not know about myself, however the people around me do know. Often blindspots are present because of denial,

trauma, distorted thinking, or just because it has never come up before.

3. I'M Guarded represents those things that I do know about myself, but I have not disclosed to others, and they do not know these things about me. Often things are guarded due to shame, fear, ego, or associated pain.

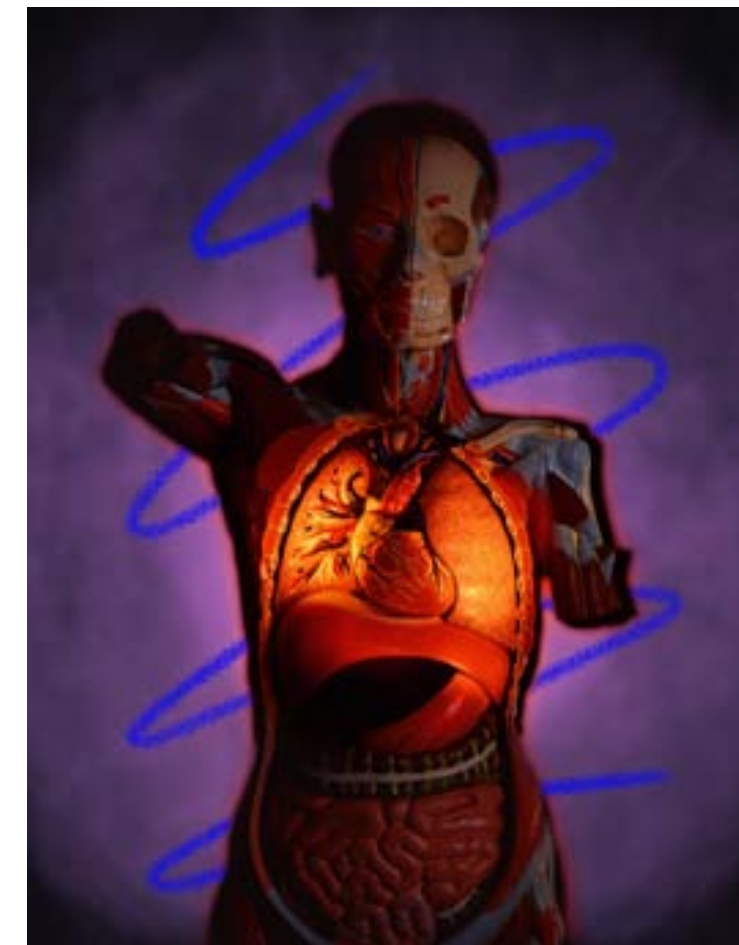
4. My Unrealized Potential represents those things that I do not know about myself, and others do not know about me. This quadrant is where personal growth is at its maximum potential.



Spring cleaning in the psychological domain can be accomplished by actively making a decision to advocate for one's own accurate thought process. Accurate thinking involves being present, in the moment, and being able to interpret what is going on around us with clarity. While difficult, when mastered, presence begets mindfulness which allows us to view our thoughts and behaviors in a non-judgmental way, so we can accept our circumstances as they are. We may have areas of our lives that we do not wish to accept, but we must, for with acceptance comes consideration, prudence, and healthy attitudes that lead to healthy courses of action in our lives. Accurate thought leads to self-awareness, it reduces our blindspots and opens up our guarded self, and accurate thought leads to greater growth through

our unrealized potential. Without accurate thought we remain stuck in the same cycle that we have always known, at least until our live circumstances cause us so much pain that we must change.

Spring cleaning of our physiological health, our body's health, also requires a conscious commitment to take care of the living tissue that in turn takes care of our spirit and soul. Our body needs us to be disciplined and routine about taking care of ourselves.



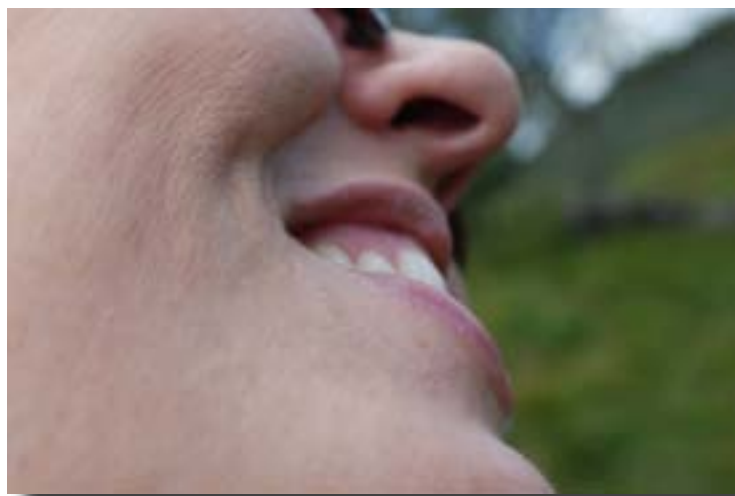
- The physical body requires rest to recover from strain and to grow and rejuvenate. When we are tired, we must allow our body to rest.
- Healthy nutrition is the best way to give your body the balanced nutrients it needs to function properly. A healthy eating plan is one that emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products. It also includes lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, and nuts. Saturat-



ed fats, trans-fats, cholesterol, salt (sodium), and added sugars should be minimized.

- Moderate cardiovascular exercise for 20-30 minutes each day will significantly improve the body's health. Moderate exercise is the equivalent of walking or jogging at a 4 – 5 mile per hour pace. Strength training is also beneficial because muscle tissue tends to break down without use.
- Play energizes us through glandular emissions that help our body invigorate. It makes us happier, renews a natural sense of optimism and allows our imaginations to thrive.
- Adventurous activities for the purpose of recreation or excitement, whether potentially dangerous or not, creates psychological and physiological arousal. Adventurous experiences push our limits and provide opportunities for internal growth.
- Creativity involving the generation of new ideas or concepts, or new association between ideas or concepts stimulates the brain and causes intellectual growth and elevates mood.

Or physiological health is not just limited to activities; there is a strong bond between the health of our body and certain mental functions as well. Our body needs us to be disciplined and responsible or we will feel the negative effects of the stress on our body in ways that lead to reduced immunity to illness, increased blood pressure, susceptibility to disease, and fatigue. Our body needs fulfilling work that helps us to create a posi-



tive self-image of ourselves, and our body needs routine activity to produce energy and promote the flow of that energy through our biological systems.

Our spirit needs some attention during spring cleaning as well. We need a higher power for help, guidance, strength, and opportunity, so that we may be relieved of the burden of solving all life's difficulties alone. We need to be kind to others, to animals, to the Earth, and most importantly to ourselves. Through kindness we will experience compassion, empathy and generosity: the forms of emotions that bind us together as human beings and give us a sense of belonging. We need to allow ourselves to be calm and to be present, to allow all forms of agitation to leave our minds for a while, and to find serenity in that peaceful place. If we can understand our higher power, find kindness, and connect to that place of serenity, we will also understand humility. Our spirit finds humility in for form of a deep comprehension that we are not in control of most circumstances, and therefore we are freed. With humility we encounter spiritual revival, and we become able to forgive those who have harmed us, and we can forgive ourselves for the harm we have caused others and ourselves.

Our spiritual spring cleaning does not end there. We must also venture into the realm of humanity. Our spirit needs family, friends and intimate partners with whom we enjoy mutual support and affinity. We need people that help us to feel confident, fulfilled and joyous. We need fellowship with people of similar tastes and interests so we can be connected to human community and participate in a life that we feel is worth living. If we have healthy relationships with those we love, we can find a joyful focus on our life, and our attitudes and outlook on life will feed our spirit. We can find optimism, we can cope with challenges in life, and we can remain faithful that situations will work themselves out for the best. We can feel gratitude toward the favor life brings. And we can laugh: from our core, we can laugh.

We will find a better quality of life if we commit to do the work, get the help, and invest in the process of spring cleaning the top 3: mind, body, spirit. **SS**

Spring Cleaning The Top 3 Spring Cleaning Checklist

Mind

- Adjust Expectations
- Let Resentments Go
- Seek Humility
- Give Freely
- Think Accurately
- Examine Your Life Intention
- Choose the Healthy Path

Body

- Exercise
- Eat Well
- Be Creative
- Be Adventurous
- Take Care of Illness
- Rest
- Play

Spirit

- Love Yourself
- Love Another
- Detach with Love
- Pray
- Meditate
- Be Generous
- Be



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Andrew Martin began his entrepreneurial approach to business in 1982 at the age of fifteen. Throughout his career, Andrew has fulfilled his duties as a senior executive in viable business ventures in various industries including; health care, sound reinforcement and lighting, electrical safety equipment, commercial catering, specialty metal

shapes manufacturing, and the entertainment overhead suspension industry.

Andrew's current business efforts are encompassed by Serene Recovery Network, a group of branded organizations with a common vision of helping people in early recovery to help themselves to a long-term rewarding quality of life without addiction. The individual businesses include Serene Center, a 36 bed transitional sober living facility in Long Beach, CA which also conducts outpatient counseling services, drug testing and monitoring, and outpatient detoxification. Serene Connections, a publishing and professional educational conference production company catering to the field of addiction treatment. Serene Directory, an online directory of professionals and organizations affiliated with behavioral and mental health. Serene Foundation, a micro loan lender providing funding for the continuum of addiction care.

Andrew has authored many articles related to addiction treatment, health care agency productivity, industry specialties, as well as business approach and leadership and has been published in Serene Scene, Behavioral Health, Freedom Newspaper, Sound & Video Contractor, Western Wall and Ceiling Contractors Association Bulletin, Connections Magazine (Australia), dB Magazine, EQ, Lighting & Sound International (Canada), Sound & Communications, Live Sound International (UK), Recording-Engineering-Production. Additionally, many patents and trademarks have been awarded to Andrew Martin for various business related products, brand names, and service marks.

Andrew is also very active in the California Association of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Counselors (CAADAC) Board of Directors and Sober Living Network. Andrew also keynotes for many organizations.