

Grandiose Delusion? Grand Vison!!!

***“You’ll be dead or hospitalized within six months
if you EVER try going off your medications.”***

*-Mistaken Prognosticator with title of
“Foremost Expert on Bi-Polar Disorder on
the (U.S.) East Coast”*

Things have been colorful enough, in behavior and affect, to earn me eight (count ‘em, **8!**) psychiatric diagnoses including schizophrenia, manic depression, chronic depression and PTSD. The first diagnosis came at age 6: “emotionally disturbed;” this presumably, because my activity of choice the first year of public school was to lay my head on my desk and weep.

At thirty-three, after decades of sporadic therapy, various spirit-numbing medication regimens, and several hospitalizations, kind fates (and Diane Neubert, *extraordinary* AVP facilitator from On High!), led me to experience my first AVP workshop at Green Haven’s Annex.

I was scared. Growing up in Brooklyn, I’d occasionally been utilized as punching bag by roving gangs of kids with darker skin tones who knew they were getting a racial raw deal. Some of the folks in Green Haven looked familiar!

When the literally seven-foot black man seated next to me, looked way down and said, “Don’t worry. You’ll be alright,” I did my best to restart my breathing. Half an hour later I was having a core-child belly laugh; feeling connected, already, in a way I’d been hungering for my whole life.

“Mental illness,” experientially for me, is rooted in self-loathing. When it came time to choose my adjective name, I had nothing positive to say. The best I could do, and this due to healing efforts over the years (and the aforementioned belly laugh), was “Nearly Noelle.” ...Cutting to the chase, the name on my affirmation poster at the end of the workshop was “Newly Noelle.” That’s how transformational those three days were.

I knew, immediately, I had come home. The form was unclear, but AVP was instantly the mission. Insights, NECESSARY SKILLS! ...internal reassessments... new perspectives and reframes, gelled... Am I crazy???. ...or maybe gifted with the sensitivity to know I am lost unless I can relate to my human family in the way we

are made to relate. Am I special in that? NO! Everyone in the circles seems to figure it out post haste!

Shortly thereafter all hospitalizations and medications ended ...and they stayed ended.

Picture the little birds that fly in beautiful, artful jumbles (there are several species!) ...this one headed this way, and we follow... that one taking us higher, and we fold in a new direction, in unison... Those are AVP Totem Animals. We all lead, we all follow... We take each other into deepest places, safe, due to our numbers... and then soar on wings of shared laughter... Our gifts are offered and received. Self-loathing didn't stand a chance with 20 loving pairs of eyes reflecting back the incredible Love I Am!

Today is November 9, 2016. We have a new president-elect. A very good time to expect the best and trust the process! Alternatives to Violence Project has been (by its own name and also as "Peace Work" and "Recovery to Practice Next Steps") the foremost words on my lips for almost a quarter of a century! And I'm only one of a beautiful, global flock!

Beyond AVP in the U.S. prison system and communities, AVP has touched sometimes the sorest, most apparently hopeless places, in 65 countries: Angola, Armenia, Australia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Britain, Burundi, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, DR Congo, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Georgia, Germany, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Hong Kong, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Liberia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Mexico, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Palestine, Peru, Philippines, Romania, Russia, Rwanda, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Slovenia, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Tanzania, Tonga, Uganda, Ukraine, USA, US Virgin Islands, Zimbabwe... (and counting!)

AVP/USA's decision to form associations with AVP-based spin-offs is a mind-boggling opportunity to spread the magic. In my world, passion within the peer support movement for example, (folks diagnosed with psychiatric or substance use challenges supporting others in healing from same) is "off the charts!" ...maybe particularly among veterans. And that's only one of many percolations afoot. It's looking like opportunities could soon arise to plug more and more of the thousands of skilled facilitators returned to their communities into roles that support their livelihood... while also inviting our weary world out of

its collective delusion: separation. A long-standing dream of many, with world saving implications! Bon voyage to us, beloved flock!

I Am the cumulative riches of the gifts received in AVP-based circles. Everyone in every circle, has uncovered or enhanced value in me in some way. This liberates me while it provides benefits to others... Thank you all, from the bottom of my heart. You are the purveyor of this Grand Vison! Looking forward to my next experience ...with you!

Love,

Now Noelle

***“Someday, after we have mastered the winds, the waves, the tides, and gravity,
we shall harness for [Transforming Power] the energies of Love.
Then for the second time in the history of the world, man will have discovered fire.”***

-Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

