



AFTERwords

A Newsletter from SIERRA TUCSON®

Spring/Summer 2011

MINDFULNESS: A Tool to Enhance Alcohol/Drug Recovery

By Richard Fields, Ph.D.

Meditation, mindfulness practices, and Buddhist teachings (dharma) have proven to be effective in helping treat many physical and psychological problems, from headaches and back pain to anxiety and depression.

John Kabat-Zinn (1990) is well known for using mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) to help patients with pain and anxiety disorders. Marsha Linehan (1993) integrated mindfulness practices in her dialectical behavior therapy (DBT) for borderline personality disorders. Steven Hayes (1999) developed a mindfulness model called acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT). Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT) was used by Zindel Segal (2002) as a relapse prevention approach to depression.

Alan Marlatt at the University of Washington explored the application of mindfulness and meditation in reducing relapse to alcohol. Marlatt et al., (2007) found that “the heightened state of present-focused awareness that is encouraged by meditation may directly counteract the conditioned automatic response to use alcohol in response to cravings and urges.”

Negative Emotions and Abstinence Violation Effect – Relapse

Negative emotional states and the abstinence violation effect are two factors that are most strongly associated with alcohol relapse.

Ironically, to suppress negative thoughts results in an increase rather than a decrease in negative thoughts (Bowen, 2007). Meditation and mindfulness teachings help to recognize (not suppress) negative emotional states, keeping them at arm’s length and identifying them as “thoughts,” “cravings,” and “urges” that do not have to be acted on.

Mindfulness-Based Behavioral Relapse Prevention (MBRP)

The overall goal of MBRP is “to develop awareness and nonjudgmental acceptance of thoughts, sensations, and emotional states through the practice of mindfulness and meditation.”

Marlatt (1992) describes “urge surfing” as an example of an MBRP technique. The recovering person is asked to visualize the urge/craving as an ocean wave. The wave has a beginning, a crest, and a smooth cycle until it turns and crashes on the shore. The breath is used as a “surfboard” to ride out the wave of urge/craving without giving into it.

Mindfulness-Based Recovery Enhancement (MBRE)

I have worked for over 25 years as a counselor, specializing in outpatient alcohol/drug recovery. For the last 3 years I have used mindfulness practices in my outpatient recovery groups, and my clients found it very helpful, especially in not being so “reactive.” I see mindfulness as enhancing recovery, improving relapse prevention skills, and very complementary to the 12-Step process.

For the purposes of this article, I can give you a sample of some teachings, concepts, and applications of mindfulness-based recovery enhancement (MBRP).

Addiction – “Land of the Hungry Ghosts”

Buddhist cosmology describes addiction as the “Land of the Hungry Ghosts,” where people have huge appetites that are unable to be satisfied. Buddhism describes addiction as being “a false refuge,” a delusional place to try and hide and escape from being present in life with the good and bad. Addiction is viewed as the inability to see the abundance and joy in our everyday lives. Developing a “calm awareness” can help in not distracting from life, instead being more present and mindful “in the now.”

(Continued on page 4)

WHAT'S INSIDE:

Mindfulness	1
S.T.A.R. 24	2
Recipe	2
Spotlight on Alumni - Scott M.	3
Spotlight on Alumni - Ellen R.	3
Alumni Support Groups	6
Progressions Program	6
From the Editor	7
Alumni World Tour.	8



S.T.A.R. 24

“Carrying the Message”

November 3 - 6, 2011

at the Westward Look Resort, Tucson, Arizona

We invite you to join us for this year's
Sierra Tucson Alumni Retreat - S.T.A.R. 24...
celebrate, reconnect, and renew your passion for recovery!

Registration for the Retreat begins on August 1, 2011!
You can make hotel accommodations now at our discounted rate.
Please visit www.SierraTucson.com for information on
accommodations, entertainment, speakers, and workshops!



Recipe by Chef Miciah Beard

Cured salmon has been around for centuries. From smoked salmon to gravlax, every region has its own distinction of this delicacy. So here is one with a Southwestern twist. This recipe is easy to follow and goes great with anything from potato pancakes to crackers or toast points.”
~Chef Miciah



Sonoran Cured Salmon with Chile-Citrus Crema

Ingredients: 2 lbs. salmon (skin on if possible)
1/2 cup raw sugar
1/4 cup kosher salt
zest of 1 lemon, lime, and orange
1 Tbsp. cayenne pepper

For Crema: 1 cup Greek yogurt, sour cream, or crème fraîche
juice from 1 lemon, lime, and orange
1 Tbsp. chile powder
salt and pepper

Procedure: Place salmon on a generous piece of plastic wrap (enough to wrap it when you are done). In a bowl, mix the sugar, salt, zest, and cayenne. Spread this mixture evenly over the salmon and wrap it. Put salmon in a container to catch the fluid that will be released and place in refrigerator for three days. Afterwards, remove from plastic, wash, and place on cutting board. When cutting, use a very sharp, thin-blade knife. You want to cut at a bias and as thin as you can. Now take your salmon and incorporate with numerous possibilities.

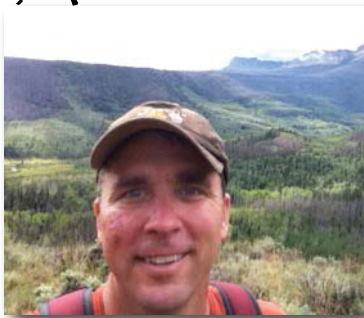
For Crema: Combine your choice of crema with citrus juice, chile powder, and salt and pepper to taste. Mix thoroughly and serve with salmon.

Serves 4-6 people: Cured Salmon, 1 oz. = 1 Protein

Crema (if using yogurt), 1 cup = 1 dairy; Crema (if using sour cream or crème fraîche), 1/4 cup = 1 fat

Spotlight on Alumni

Scott M.



My first day at Sierra Tucson was November 6, 2009. The lives I led before and after that date could not be more different. I quit drinking 16 years before entering ST for depression, anxiety, and an addiction to marijuana and prescription medications. I went to a couple of AA meetings after quitting, but I was able to will myself to quit for all of those years without reaching out to others for help or working a program. I did not know it then, but I was living as a dry drunk. All that changed were my drinking habits. I always told people that the hardest thing about quitting was replacing the drinking with something else.

Fast forward 16 years, through 2 marriages, children, house, career, and all of the stress and responsibility that go along with these things. Living in the mental environment that had never changed since the day I quit drinking, I felt that smoking copious amounts of weed and using meds to “relax” were perfectly fine because I was an alcoholic and wasn’t drinking. Well, we all know the end to that story: “epic fail!” as my teenage son would say. So, there I was on the doorstep of ST on November 6, trying to figure out what went wrong, or more specifically, in complete denial of my condition. My first week there I was focused on how to integrate my marijuana use with my recovery. I was depressed, that’s all! But then, by no other way to describe it other than grace, it finally started to click. Over the next 3 weeks I came to realize that it wasn’t all about me, but it WAS all about me. I had daily epiphanies. I felt like I was finally in a place where they taught me the secrets of living a successful, sober, and serene life. I was being handed the keys to the kingdom. The biggest revelation I had was the thing that replaces drinking and using is the program and the amazing transformation that occurs from working the Steps. Not sure how I missed that one several years back, but I suppose we hear things when we are ready to hear them.

Well, I thought I had it licked when I drove out of Tucson, pink cloud and all, only to be on the threshold of relapse a week after returning home. Again, by grace, I fell in with a wonderful AA group, picked up a sponsor, did my 90 in 90 (honestly, the best words I have ever heard from my sponsor when I told him I didn’t think this was for me was, “Just give it 90 days, then reevaluate. It won’t kill you, but using will.” Glad I gave it another chance!) Nose to the grindstone, I began to discover fundamental changes in my thinking, particularly with how I perceived myself and the world around me. I stopped isolating and began accepting new people in my life and opening up to them. Anger and resentment began to fall away. The biggest change I have experienced is with my faith in a higher power. It’s so much easier to go through life without feeling the need to control everything—I just give it up and let life happen. That way I am open and aware of my surroundings and respond to opportunities that I would miss if

(Continued on page 5)

Ellen R.



Hi, I’m Ellen R. I came to Sierra Tucson in May of 1998 at the age of 19. I was the youngest patient there at the time. I was going to treatment because I was very unhappy. My parents and my therapist said I was going to treatment because I was anorexic. I was scared to death. The sad thing, I was not going for myself.

Although there was a lot of addiction/dysfunction in my family, no one addressed the issue. I come from an educated middle-class family in Indiana. I had never seen Arizona, a desert, or a treatment facility. In fact, we have AA and NA meetings at our church on Saturday mornings; my Mom used to tell my sister and I to not make eye contact with the “addicts,” like we’d catch something from them. That was my only exposure to the Twelve Steps!

Some people are lucky enough to get what they need from treatment the first time. I was not so lucky. So, yes, I am a two-timer of Sierra Tucson. I returned in November of 1999. However, this time I was much more focused and driven. I knew what I wanted to work on and with whom. I was ready to address deeper issues of childhood sexual abuse, so I could start to heal.

Sierra Tucson gave me so many gifts. It finally let me be truthful. I was brought down to my “rawest” state—where I did not know if I had any more tears left, I was beyond tired, and every muscle and bone ached in my body. I had so many friends, and they keep on growing. I know what true serenity feels like—I may not always be there, but I know it when it comes back around.

The alumni reunions have been my saving graces! I have only missed two since leaving treatment: 1998 due to aftercare, and 2006 when I started a new job. They are a recharge for my soul. I meet new friends every year and see old ones. I get to hear new advances in addiction therapies and take them home to my therapist. I get pampered at the spa—it is a gift I only give myself at the reunion. It is a weekend just for me!

I guess God decided my trials were not over yet and would throw something else into the mix. Depression, OCD, Panic, Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Anorexia, ACOA, Childhood Sexual Abuse Survivor, Codependent, and Sexual Anorexic weren’t enough! No, cancer survivor would be the next. I was diagnosed October 19, 2009. I was biopsied on the 13th (a day before my 31st birthday). My surgeon called to tell me the news, while driving, “You have Invasive Ductal Carcinoma.” That is breast cancer. Who did I call first? Not my family. The person who would help get me through this—my support—now. The Alumni Coordinator, Tim McLeod, was who I called and, luckily, he answered. He listened to me sob and not make much sense on the other end of the phone. (In later perspective, I told him, that was what I needed, just someone to listen.)

(Continued on page 5)

Mindfulness: A Tool to Enhance Alcohol/Drug Recovery *(Continued from page 1)*

Compassion

The foundation of all mindfulness practices is “Compassion.” In Western culture we are prone to be hard on others, and even harder on ourselves.

“I am the source of my own suffering, because of the habits of my mind.” ~Dalai Lama

Life is difficult enough without beating yourself up. Instead of beating yourself up, embrace your “inner goodness” and have self-compassion.

“All beings want to be happy, yet so very few know how. It is out of ignorance that any of us cause suffering for ourselves or for others.” ~Sharon Salzberg, Loving Kindness

Learning how to be more compassionate toward others’ suffering, as well as our own, is a much more sustainable way of life and recovery.

“Compassion is the strong and deep feeling that wants to alleviate the suffering of beings, and it arises when we allow ourselves to come close to suffering, both our own and that of others.” ~Joseph Goldstein, One D

Buddhism – A Living Psychology

Noted Buddhist teacher and psychologist Jack Kornfield has said that “Buddhism has been described as the most spiritual of psychologies and the most psychological form of spirituality.”

Kornfield describes Buddha’s teachings as a “living psychology” with a focus on helping individuals to find their “freedom.”

“Buddhist masters... are practitioners of a living psychology, one of the oldest and most well-developed systems of healing and understanding on the face of the earth.”

Kornfield points out the extreme differences in approach between the clinical psychology field and the “psychology of Buddhism.” Whereas clinical psychology focuses on disorders, the psychology of Buddhism focuses on living and that we are all in this together (see chart below).

Clinical Psychology	Psychology of Buddhism
Focus on pathology	Focus on living and freedom
25 states of depression	25 states of rapture
A list of anxiety disorders	A list of states of trust & contentment
Emphasis on independence	Emphasis on interdependence

Definitions of Mindfulness

To get a better sense of mindfulness, here are some definitions by various practitioners:

“The awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally to the unfolding of experience, moment by moment.” ~Kabat-Zinn, 2003

“Mindfulness has to do with the quality of both awareness and participation that a person brings to everyday life.”

~Hayes, Follette, Linehan, 2004

“Broadly conceptualized mindfulness has been described as a nonelaborative, nonjudgmental, present-centered awareness in which each thought, feeling, or sensation that arises in the attentional field is acknowledged and accepted as it is.”

~Mark Lau and Zindel Segal, 2007

Self-Delusion

“The essence of bravery is being without self-deception.”

~Pema Chodron, When Things Fall Apart

Often during counseling sessions we sit and smile together as we see how we trick ourselves. We smile at the self-delusion, recognizing how easily it can be evoked. It starts by recognizing how “the fire of the ego” will blind us to our own self-delusion.

“Because of mindfulness, we see our desires and our aggression, our jealousy and our ignorance. We don’t act on them; we just see them. Without mindfulness, we don’t see them and they proliferate.” ~Pema Chodron, Comfortable with Uncertainty

Issues of Surrender and Control – “Mindful Surrender”

The Serenity Prayer of Alcoholics Anonymous reminds us that there are times you are not in control and are better off “letting go.”

In Buddhist teachings (dharma), change is described as “mindful surrender.” Only when we truly let go can things run their natural course and change.

“Buddhism recognizes that the central issues of our lives, from falling in love to facing death, require an ability to surrender that often eludes us.” ~Mark Epstein, Going to Pieces without Falling Apart

My intention in writing this article was to give you a mindfulness sampler. I hope that you want to explore more about mindfulness in your recovery and life. If you are interested in learning more, please read any of the books listed in the recommended reading section of this article.

I hope that you might attend one of our Mindfulness conferences (see Facesconferences.com) or upcoming training sessions. You can also see videos of our previous mindfulness conferences/workshops at our Faces Conferences Facebook page.



Richard Fields, Ph.D., is the founder/director of Faces Conferences, a leader in the delivery of mindfulness conferences. He has a mindfulness coaching practice and is the author of the college textbook, Drugs in Perspective, 7th edition, McGraw Hill, 2008, and Awakening to Mindfulness, Health Communications Inc., 2009.

(Continued on page 5)

Spotlight on Alumni (Continued from page 3)

Scott M...

I was busy being the director. Everything happens for a reason, and the world will do fine without my meddling! My faith in my higher power has instilled a strong sense of mindfulness and meditative serenity, at least most of the time. These concepts were a dream before, something unattainable just a short time before, but I feel blessed that they are now a part of my daily life.

I cannot say enough about my life-changing experience at ST. I honestly don't think there would have been any other way to discover and become the person I always wanted to become. I wanted to stay in contact with that environment, that feeling of safety and connection, so I started an alumni group in my city. We just celebrated the first anniversary of our first meeting, and it was a wonderful experience. It feels like a gift that keeps on giving.

My thanks to all of the counselors, group members, roommates, nurses, and therapists. It was an experience that truly saved my life.

~Scott M. ★



Ellen R...

Each day of cancer is like being on a speeding train that you cannot get off. I started off with just one large tumor that I could feel. With more and more tests, the doctors found more. I ended up having six tumors. Due to fact that I had multiple tumors, the surgeon said I not only had IDC but also Multifocal Disease, meaning mastectomies for sure. I got scheduled for early December for bilateral mastectomies. One of my tumors was noncancerous, and the insurance company fought with me about my doctor's choice of doing a bilateral surgery, so the insurance postponed the surgery and would not cover the December surgery. My breast surgeon and the plastic surgeon (doing the other half of the surgery) had to re-enter paperwork on my behalf to get the surgery covered.

In 2010 I had bilateral mastectomies on January 14th and two reconstructive surgeries on June 15th and December 9th. I'll be on medication for five years to keep all female hormones from being made by my body (so more tumors are not made). I have been to more doctors' appointments than I hope anyone else ever has to go to. My immune system is not the best—I get sick a lot! I had been making tumors as of an MRI scan in August, but my scan two weeks ago, in April 2011, showed I was clear! I am alive! I am a survivor!

And the best part, Tim and Patty were right there with me all the way. I was never alone—one of my worst fears. Whether it was text, email, a phone call, a card, or a visit, my Sierra Tucson family was not far away. Tim told me I could do this. Fight the cancer. I had fought harder fights in treatment and life. But, cancer took parts of me and some of my spirit. It did not take my soul! See you at the Alumni Retreat!

~Ellen R. ★

Mindfulness / Recommended Reading & References (Continued from page 4)

Recommended Reading

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Brach, Tara. *Radical Acceptance: Embracing Your Life with the Heart of a Buddha*. Bantam, 2004.

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Salzberg, Sharon. *Loving Kindness: The Revolutionary Art of Happiness*. Boston, Shambhala, 1990. ★



Alumni Support Groups

Sierra Tucson Alumni Support Groups are currently located in the cities listed below. Information about each of these Alumni Support Groups can be found at www.SierraTucson.com (click on “Alumni, Alumni Support Groups”). If you want to start a group in your area or just want to know what it takes, please contact Alumni Coordinator Patty Reyna at **888-535-8214** or PREyna@SierraTucson.com.

Scottsdale, AZ
Los Angeles, CA
Northern CA
Denver, CO
Southeast FL
Atlanta, GA
Chicago, IL
Kansas City, KS

Boston, MA
Detroit, MI
St. Louis, MO
New York, NY
Syracuse, NY
Philadelphia, PA
Dallas, TX
Houston, TX

Progressions Program



Sierra Tucson’s Progressions Program is available to alumni of Sierra Tucson and other individuals who are seeking to further their recovery skills! This program was developed from feedback received from staff, professionals in the field, and alumni to more fully prepare individuals for the challenges of living in recovery.

In this intensive 2- to 4-week program, specialized treatment planning gives greater exposure to people, places, and situations that may trigger reactions and cravings. Balanced with expert therapeutic guidance, participants gain advanced recovery tools and are equipped for the many challenges to be faced in their journey.

The program’s “experiential workshop” format teaches individuals to evaluate choices, become aware of self-sabotaging behaviors, and take responsibility for behavioral changes. This is an exceptional opportunity to focus on personal relapse prevention needs and work on deeper issues to enjoy a full and meaningful life.

Components of the Progressions Program may include:

- Develop specific, personal recovery plans
- Intensify participation in a 12-Step fellowship
- Expand intuitive skills to help individuals make healthy choices
- Individual Life Coaching
- Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT)
- Address vocational/career change issues
- Opportunities for outings (12-Step meetings, dinners, hike, etc.) within a safe setting to practice and process coping skills
- Specialized therapies such as EMDR, Pain Management services, and Integrative Therapies
- Two-day Couple’s Workshop
- Two-week EMDR Intensives™ are available for individuals currently in therapy who want to accelerate the healing process

Those who need help with an active addiction or disorder typically require a minimum of 30 days for effective treatment. Each person is assessed on a case-by-case basis to determine if the Progressions Program will meet his/her needs.

“Progressions is an incredibly important program that reminded me where I’ve been, where I am, and where I need to go.”

~ David K.

For more information about the Progressions Program or EMDR Intensives™, please call Sierra Tucson’s Intake Department at 800-842-4487.



From the Editor By Tim McLeod, Senior Alumni Coordinator

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Hello, my Friend,

The longer I live, the more I understand the word balance. I've come to realize that balance does not look like someone on a balance beam with both arms pointing straight out to the side. If I'm in balance, it looks like one arm pointing up and the other down. The one pointing up represents those I have placed in my life who guide, encourage, nurture, and lift me up. The arm pointing down represents those who I'm helping, supporting, encouraging, and lifting up. An example would be an individual who is being sponsored and is also sponsoring. And like my little stick drawing represents, between each arm is the heart that, when in balance, has a harmonious beat.



Mother Teresa once said, "If you want a love message to be heard, it has got to be sent out. To keep a lamp burning, we have to keep putting oil in it." If you want to bring the love, what is filling you with love? You can't give what you don't have, and you can't receive what isn't there.

Think for a moment, where are you reaching for support? Is it towards healing and life-nurturing guidance, or are you reaching at all? Then reflect on the ways you're giving back and helping others. I can boldly say that the work you engaged in at Sierra Tucson equipped you with a healing medicine. Your awareness to those who are struggling with the same pain and mental anguish you once dealt with has been heightened. You can now pass on to them words of hope, encouragement, love, and courage.

It sure seems like a long wait for S.T.A.R. 24 to arrive. Last year's Alumni Retreat was so amazing, we never wanted it to end. If you're a patient or family member alumni, you will not want to miss what we have in store for you this year. Without a doubt, we will top last year's experience. So fill out the paid time off request and call the neighbor to watch the dog, because from November 3-6, 2011, your arm needs to be reaching out and receiving much needed encouragement and love at this year's Retreat. Registration begins on August 1, 2011. Information on the Retreat can be found at www.SierraTucson.com.

We are now tweeting! You can follow us on Twitter at [Twitter.com/DesertSerenity](https://twitter.com/DesertSerenity). Also the private Sierra Tucson Facebook page is full of support. If you would like to join our group, search Facebook for [PREyna@SierraTucson.com](https://www.facebook.com/Preyna@SierraTucson.com). Then "Friend" her and let her know you want to be a part of this group, and she will add you to this powerful network of alumni friends.

Patty's list of alumni contacts from around the world continues to grow. If you would like to be a part of this list—maybe searching for a contact in your area or wondering how to start an Alumni Support Group—please contact Patty at PREyna@SierraTucson.com.

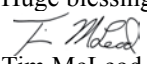
Evening/Weekend Therapist Wayne Zespy would love to hear from you if you would like to come to Sierra Tucson on a Saturday evening and share your experience, strength, and hope with the patient community. You can reach Wayne at LZespy@SierraTucson.com.

The 12-Step Path will be updated prior to the Alumni Retreat with benches and pavestones purchased before September 1, 2011. Only one bench remains to be purchased, and we have plenty of space for many more pavestones. If you are looking to give your loved one or alumni friend something to celebrate their recovery, this might be the perfect gift. You can find more information at www.SierraTucsonBricks.com.

Sierra Tucson continues to strive to become more green in its support of the environment by using less paper. If you are receiving the Alumni eNews "Beyond the Miracle" and would like to be removed from our postal mailings, please contact me. If you have never heard of Sierra Tucson's bi-weekly Alumni eNews and would like to receive it, please sign up at www.SierraTucson.com (click the "Alumni" tab, then "Newsletters").

In closing, thank you to Dr. Richard Fields for his contributing article on Mindfulness, and also a big thank you to Ellen and Scott for sharing their amazing stories of experience, strength, and hope.

Patty and I look forward to connecting with you at an Alumni Support Group, workshop, or the amazing Alumni Retreat. Most of all, please never hesitate to reach out if we can be of support.

Huge blessings,

Tim McLeod

■ *"Our mission is simple: encourage the struggling, celebrate the miracles, and always bring the love."* ■



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Address Service Requested



Alumni World Tour

Alumni and family members are invited to join our Alumni Coordinators at the following events!

Upcoming 2011 Alumni World Tour dates can be found on our website and in the biweekly Alumni eNews, "Beyond the Miracle." Please check regularly for changes and updates.

This is not a complete list of events, but it shows alumni events attended by Tim McLeod and/or Patty Reyna.

June 2011

- 2 – Detroit, MI, Alumni Support Group
- 8 – Los Angeles, CA, Alumni Support Group
- 9 – Philadelphia, PA, Alumni Support Group
- 11 – Atlanta, GA, Alumni Support Group
- 20 – Chicago, IL, Alumni Support Group
- 20 – New York, NY, Alumni Support Group
- 21 – Indianapolis, IN, Alumni Workshop
- 22 – St. Louis, MO, Alumni Support Group
- 29 – Kansas City Lecture Series

July 2011

- 12 – Houston, TX, Alumni Workshop
- 13 – Oklahoma City, OK, Alumni Workshop
- 26 – Scottsdale, AZ, Alumni Support Group

August 2011

- 2 – Houston, TX, Alumni Support Group
- 2 – Denver, CO, Alumni Support Group
- 3 – Dallas, TX, Alumni Support Group
- 17 – Seattle, WA, Alumni Workshop
- 18 – Portland, OR, Alumni Workshop
- 20 – Northern CA, Alumni Support Group

September 2011

- 1 – Detroit, MI, Alumni Support Group
- 19 – Southeast FL, Alumni Support Group
- 20 – Scottsdale, AZ, Alumni Support Group
- 21 – Los Angeles, CA, Alumni Support Group