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problems. After reading the descriptions, it is very clear what the author is describing in that chapter and how the abstract concept can play out in real life.

Then, in the last chapter, he gathers all the loose threads together. Titled "Where Are They Now?" he describes their lives currently. Most of the updates are heartwarming. The girl who was angry, running away, heavily into the drug culture, estranged from her parents with a clouded future is now happily married with wonderful children, successful in business and has a great relationship with her parents. Or, the boy who was a recluse with an enabling mother is now succeeding in a college dorm and dating an extrovert girl. Unfortunately, just as in real life, not all the stories are positive. Sometimes no amount of intervention will work with some children. One girl 12 years later was still homeless, wandering the country looking for something that probably doesn't exist and thus she will never find. Another just dropped out of sight after intervention and nobody that had been in his life, including his parents, have heard from him for years.

This book is well worth the investment of the couple hours it takes to read it, and well worth the time to study it closer and think through how it applies.

EXTENDED INSIGHTS... IN BALANCE RANCH

Tombstone, Arizona
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Visit by Larry Stednitz April 25, 2007

In Balance Ranch is a therapeutic boarding school for boys who struggle with substance abuse and co-occurring mental health issues. Open for only three years, In-Balance has already garnered acceptance from educational consultants and families. The program is located outside of Tucson, Arizona.

My interest in this program is to understand the man and staff who operate this program. Patrick Barrasso, the founder, is a 47 year old former cowboy who worked in Buffalo, Wyoming, prior to getting involved in substance abuse treatment. He moved to Tucson in 1979 to work on an undergraduate degree in family relations with plans to earn a law degree in order to help reform the juvenile justice system with changes he felt were needed after having volunteered as a big brother in the juvenile court system. He was disappointed in the "lock them up" attitude and

In 1983 Wilderness Treatment Center was the first program to successfully blend conventional treatment with a true wilderness expedition. Our in-patient center is located on a working cattle ranch in Northwest Montana. The setting is perfect for young men who can have a difficult time in the confinement of a conventional program. Treatment includes plenty of ranch work, group and individual therapy, educational lectures and films, attendance at AA/NA meetings in nearby Kalispell, plus a 16 to 21 day true wilderness expedition.

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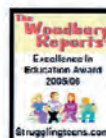
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punitive approaches to the treatment of youth within the court system. Influenced by a graduate school professor, Patrick was encouraged to obtain a clinical license instead of a law degree. Patrick graduated with an MSW degree from Arizona State University in 1989 and later was licensed as a clinical social worker. Patrick learned early on that he “fell in love” with working with substance abusing teens.

In 1991, he began working on the concept of a holistic residential treatment program that would not use the “break them down and build them back up” approaches that were so prevalent in the 60’s through

the better part of the 1980’s. Parallel to designing In Balance, Patrick began a strength based outpatient treatment program for adolescents. It soon became clear that the vast majority of his patients were abusing alcohol and drugs. Through this experience, his direction was set.

In 1996, Patrick began to refine his thinking of what an adolescent needs to overcome this debilitating and life threatening behavior. In 1996, he opened In Balance out patient program with three boys in treatment. The first In Balance approach included the 12-step model, cognitive behavioral therapy, and other theories. By 1998, Patrick had two outpatient programs operating, including both adults and adolescents. 40 adults and adolescents participated in these programs.

Patrick’s dream of developing a holistic therapeutic boarding school for boys was solidified after giving the eulogy at a former patient’s funeral. After excessive drinking, the boy died in a car accident. Patrick was encouraged by the boy’s mother to live out his dream and help others who are facing the same fate. After this experience, Patrick talked with his wife and son, who was ready to graduate from high school. He knew the work would require a lot of

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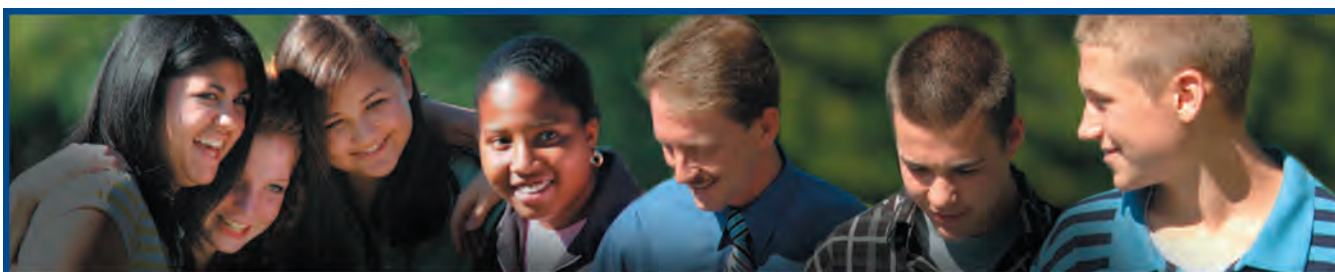
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his time, and the family joined in and told him to “go for it.” The involvement of his family on the decision seems to be typical of Patrick’s management style. Patrick and his highly experienced staff encourage and support each other, with all contributing to the dream Patrick initiated. It was obvious to me that the entire team has a unique feeling of ownership of the program.

Six months prior to opening, Patrick and many of the In Balance staff held a think tank and worked together designing a program designed specifically for adolescents. Patrick operates a program that has included input and guidance from his family and key staff. He personally was influenced by research as well as Albert Ellis, Larry Bentro, Arnold Goldstein, Carl Rogers, Terence Gorski and others. The program uses cognitive behavioral approaches, many developed by Ellis. Goldstein’s influence impressed upon Patrick that adolescents need skills that serve to displace destructive behaviors with constructive pro-social behaviors. Goldstein also influenced Patrick with tools to identify and more appropriately recognize triggers for anger and other destructive activities. Moral reasoning is included in his work, addressing the egocentric nature of drug using teens and their delayed and limited thinking process. Rogers contributions are best known for the underlying belief

that all of us, if given the opportunity, are capable of drawing out of ourselves the right choices in our lives. Bentro, the positive peer culture guru, has been instrumental in In Balance Ranch’s core foundation. I asked Patrick whether In Balance ran a “pure” positive peer culture program. Patrick laughed and told me that Bentro told him that in reality, as long as there are kids needing help, the attainment of a “pure” positive peer culture will never exist! Gorski’s primary contribution was centered around relapse prevention. Patrick is trained in the Gorski Relapse Prevention Model.

By design, the program includes many therapies that address adolescent issues. These include family involvement, equine therapy, adventure therapies, positive peer approaches, community service, physical fitness, sweat lodges, 12- step approaches, therapists who effectively deal with co-occurring issues and a strong academic program. Many, including this writer, would be skeptical of covering so many bases in a program, let alone developing these components during start-up. I first visited the program over a year ago, and the program included these components from the beginning. Today they are solidified and all contribute to the program’s content. Nevertheless, it is expensive to operate a program with all of the services that In Balance



Not all troubled teens are into drugs and alcohol.

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provides. In Balance, unlike so many programs, has set a limit of 44 students even though they could easily move to over 100 students within a year. Patrick has consistently vowed that the program will avoid the temptation to increase its number of boys.

I asked Patrick how he saw the 12-step model since many think that it has little influence on teenagers. Patrick agreed this is true, if the 12-step concepts are used alone. However, in combination of the various other program components, 12-step approaches are critical to long term sobriety. Furthermore, 12-step meetings can be found all over the country, enabling the boys to attend and be supported wherever they live in and out of the country. He went on to say that the use of 12-steps is an integral component of programming and its use after the program is one of the best indicators of post treatment success. I also asked him if he thought that relapse is a normal part of adolescent recovery. He said that because relapse can end up being fatal, In Balance stresses the importance of relapse prevention efforts.

We discussed the numerous program models around the country as I was interested in his point of view on length of stay and intensity. Patrick's point of view was that a typical 30-day program can realistically be expected to be able to introduce a few concepts and be used as a diagnostic tool. He believes that research and his experience indicates a minimum of one year is necessary for success.

Group and educational components are part of the program to address the myriad of problems adolescents face and experience today, including such issues as trauma, the disease model, divorce recovery, depression, anxiety, medications, family issues, and other co-occurring issues.

In a clinical meeting I attended, Patrick talked of helping the boys experience healthy activities to replace drinking and drug use. He believes that the program needs to continually find ways to make sobriety fun. I had fun with the In Balance staff and can understand why there has been no turnover with the key original staff members.

I learned that over the coming weekend, Patrick was to be a key speaker in Las Vegas at the U.S. Journal's 5th Las Vegas Conference on Adolescents. Patrick speaks nationally on a variety of adolescent topics including the challenges of overcoming the culture of adolescent substance abuse. At this conference, Patrick was presenting three different topics on adolescents. Patrick has come a long way from the cowboy country of Wyoming.

FIVE SUCCESSFUL TIPS FOR DISTANCE LEARNERS

By Doug Covey

I had the fortunate opportunity in my early twenties to travel abroad. Because I was on foreign land for the first time, I found myself overwhelmed and confused. Navigating my way around Kings Cross Railway Station in London was an adventurous experience. After a few mishaps, I learned how to plan ahead, manage my time and locate helpful resources to find my way around Europe. Navigating your way in the world of distance learning can be equally as overwhelming. In a recent student survey administered in 2006 by Blueprint Education, a non-profit distance learning provider, 86% of the students were taking a distance learning course for the first time. Learning how to navigate through a foreign country allowed me to feel successful, explore further inland and learn more than I could have imagined. By following these five successful tips, you can save a lot of time and money and explore an exciting new world.

1. **Choose the right school:** Selecting the right school is the most significant educational choice you have to make. Make sure the school you choose is accredited by one of the six premier American regional school accrediting commissions. If the school is not properly accredited, secondary and post-secondary schools may reject the credits you earned.
2. **Manage your time:** In a self paced, open enrollment, flexible learning environment, managing your time wisely is a key to success. Set specific goals and objectives for yourself and stick to them. Creating daily, weekly and monthly goals defined by specific objectives will help you reach deadlines.
3. **Connect with your teacher:** The ability to form a meaningful relationship with your teacher will allow you to have the opportunity to share your understanding of the course, stay motivated, and learn more. Although your classes are online, you can stay connected through message boards, email, and other electronic resources.
4. **Know your resources:** The most widely used search engine today is Google. There are a lot of online materials available to help you with your studies. General resources such as online dictionaries, encyclopedias, writing resources, atlases and maps are useful tools. Identifying these sites from the start will save you time and money and help you find success in your course.

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