

ATLAS of Osceola Co.

Attaining Truth, Love And Self-control

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From the Director's Desk...



I've been going to see him since last fall. He'd been coming to see me long before then. Jail-time is what it is but for some it can serve a greater purpose than merely a consequence. Personal growth can blossom when outside-world distractions are kept to a minimum. He's been growing like crazy and also uses this "time" to write letters; I look forward to seeing his handwriting. What follows is something too good to keep in an envelope. He gave permission to share it with each of you.

Well, here I am in my underwear (which aint even mine) writing you another letter. Thanks for coming to see me again. Sometimes after you come to see me my brain feels like it just threw-up—and then feels so much better. Thanks for teaching me how to unload that "puke." It really takes the edge off.

So the more I reflect in here the more comfortable I get. I don't feel so angry or so self-absorbed anymore. You have helped me open my eyes and see a bigger picture, pointing out my strengths and showing me I'm worthy. It's been a long painful road. Been to counselor after counselor and still didn't feel any different. I do feel different now working with you. You taught me to be honest for a change—honest with myself and others. That's a (the) big thing. And thanks for helping me not over-think the crap anymore. It was horrible being stuck in my own mind some days pondering and sweating

the small stuff. I'm starting to feel free in my own head (finally)!!!

I feel like I'm my own person now and I don't need to be so self-righteous anymore. I can be okay to praise Jesus and still have my sense of humor. I was always so worried that to serve and love Jesus I'd have to give up everything that made me. . . me. But Jesus and my dad are not the same person. It's so strange—I always connected the two of them. Now I know Jesus will love and accept me for who I am. I feel really good about that. Thank-you for helping me get through my hatred and showing me I'm not one to judge anyone. I know how to feel about certain people in a healthier way now. I'll just love them from afar until they want to have a relationship with me. Besides, God will definitely put the right people in my life.

I guess through it all, I can say my time in jail has helped me really understand what's important and how God had this planned. Maybe this time is like a penalty-flag and I needed a breather or He's saving me from something that would have killed me. All I know is I'm happy today and will do my best to be happy tomorrow. There's beauty in every day, you just gotta look for it.

Thank-you Clark (and the awesome ladies at ATLAS) for the help past, present and future. Cause I still have a long road but this time I'll have speed limits, guard-rails and seat belts. I just wanna live and do God's will, love Jesus, my family and friends and be successful with my future endeavors. And this time nothing will be stopping me except me. Cause even if I fall flat on my face, now I have the

"What is ATLAS?"

"A place to come when you don't know where to turn."

To put it simply, we are here to help those experiencing distress. Emotional, spiritual, physical or relational issues can turn one's world upside-down. ATLAS offers a safe, confidential place to let it all out and then talk it through. We will listen, encourage and pray with you. It's our mission and privilege to love each person, guide them in the right direction and walk with them on their journey.

tools to pick myself up and move on. I'm thankful to God, you and ATLAS for showing me where I can be and giving me those tools to help me get there. I'm thankful for you being my soft place to land—and for giving me a kick in the *** when I need it! I know I got someone to help me up if I stumble.



Just remember, you are changing lives, man. You've done more than you know for me.

Scotty

P.S. Maybe there's a possibility for me to lead someone from the dark to the light.

Scotty,

The past 6 months provided me the privilege of time with you. Despite glass between us during visits, know I consider our meetings as time spent on holy-ground. We'll never get this time back and I'm thankful for how you've blessed me as we met together. Thanks for sharing your "time" with me. You know I'm here for you. . . no matter what.

Clark



It has been over 2 years since our ATLAS office and 2 prayer teams have been praying for one church and two businesses each week. I

am just finishing up our list of businesses and starting all over again. It has been so cool to be able to contact our 19 churches and 200+ businesses and talk to the person on the other end of the line. The calls have been well received. Many times we pray in general for employers/employees and their families, traveling mercies, good health, good business, those types of things. We have also taken specific requests for loved ones or co-workers, family and friends going through a trial. I've had only two responses suggesting we pray for someone else because they were "ok." But I have to confess, we have prayed for them anyway.



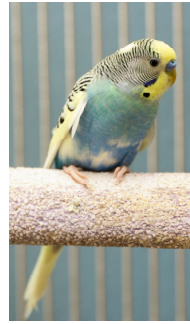
The privilege of praying for churches and businesses has been a true blessing for me. And I'm safe in saying it has blessed the prayer teams too.

I'm sure I've missed a business or two that wasn't on my list. So, if you have a business and I have not contacted you or left a message, please call the ATLAS office and give us the name of your business and phone number so you can be added. The prayer teams and I would love to pray for you too.

Merilyce Ver Steeg
Prayer/Mentor Coordinator

Client Quotes

- "I get treated like an equal here and it feels so good."
- "You really *can* go ice-fishing without being drunk."
- "Meeting at ATLAS is different than talking to a counselor, it's like talking to a friend."
- "You are truly a good friend that Jesus shines his light through."
- "Thanks for all the positive things you are pushing at me when I need it."
- "I started talking to you and my life has changed a lot."
- "If I get a DWI driving home I'll bring someone to the Lord while I wait to get bonded-out."



"Jude's Jottings" A Bird's-Eye-View

I'm Jude. I'm new to the birdcage here at ATLAS and right off the bat I had to write an article for the newsletter. I've never had to write an article before but I'll do my best. Unfortunately, I must start with some tough news. Clyde died unexpectedly not long ago. I guess that was a sad day here in the office. They say it was probably a heart attack. He's wrapped in swaddling-plastic lying in the freezer. He'll be buried this spring when the ground thaws.

I'm told everyone loved Clyde. So after arriving here it didn't take long to realize I had very big shoes to fill. His beautiful voice and bright colors drew people to him. He was tall, handsome, a great writer and had a fan-club. People even dropped-off bird seed for him. I'm just a common parakeet—the kind you can find in any pet store. Clyde was a legend; I'm just me. His shoes are too big. I began to give-up.

But everyone here at ATLAS welcomed me. They told me I mustn't compare myself to anyone; comparison can be destructive. And here, for the first time, I was told my worth is not measured by my colors, singing ability or how many people like me. At ATLAS they accept me just the way I am. They like me for me and I don't have to try to be somebody I'm not—or fill anybody else's shoes. And you know, I've heard them say the same thing to others who come through the door. Here you are welcomed, accepted and treated with respect. Doesn't matter if you are famous like Clyde or common as can be like me. Here you'll find out you matter. That made a huge difference for me. In fact, it changed everything.

Now I'm singing my own song and settling-in with confidence. And what's really great is that Sweetie likes me. She and I are ready to meet and greet everyone who comes through the ATLAS door. So be sure to come over to the birdcage and introduce yourself. I'm looking forward to meeting you.

Until next time. . .

I'm Jude,



and I approve this message.

Director:

Clark Haken

Client Advocates:

Jan Pearson

Tricia Dagel

Merilyce Ver Steeg



Office Staff:

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Murt Vogel
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Board Members:

John Van Diepen, Pres.
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Steve Swenson
Peg Van Kley
Kathleen Osterman
Doug Noonkester
Bill Boer

ATLAS Wish List

- Postage stamps
- Coffee ~ 13 gal trash bags
- Mountain Dew & Orange pop
- HP #240 ink cartridge
- Parakeet bird seed
- Single serving chips

