

MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders *By Sorika de Swardt – Addiction Consultant at Elim Clinic*

Pregnancy is stressful, no doubt. Pouring a glass of wine after work to relieve some stress and discomfort, or simply enjoying a cider at a party may all seem harmless for a mom-to-be. We jokingly say “I eat for two” when we’re pregnant, but let’s not forget that we also drink for two.

When you drink alcohol during pregnancy, it reaches the developing fetus, crossing to the placenta through the mother’s bloodstream. The fetus can’t metabolize the alcohol as fast as the mother and the blood-alcohol concentration in the baby increases. The alcohol prevents sufficient oxygen and necessary nutrients from reaching the baby’s developing organs and tissues. Miscarriage, premature birth, stillbirth and low birth weight are the likely outcomes associated with a mother’s drinking. The more you drink during pregnancy, the greater the risk you are taking with your unborn baby’s health. Longer term consequences includes problems with concentration and ability to learn as well as a range of physical abnormalities.

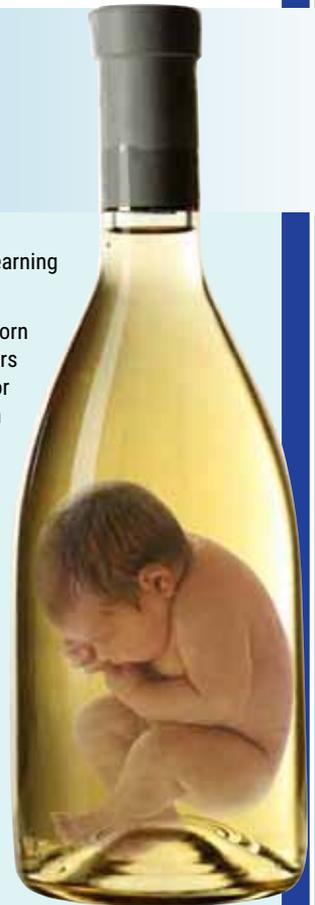
Fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASDs) are a group of conditions that can occur in a person whose mother used alcohol during pregnancy. It is sad to think that it is a preventable but incurable disorder. Once a baby is born with FASD’s it can never be reversed. The best case scenario is to offer the child a range of therapies and treatments to enhance the quality of their lives. However, prevention is the only cure and to prevent FASDs, a woman should not drink alcohol at all whilst pregnant, nor when she plans to fall pregnant. So, next time you consider having alcohol, consider this

first: FASD’s are 100% preventable physical and learning disabilities.

Most mothers want only what is best for her unborn baby’s future and although there are many factors that mothers cannot control, this is one factor the mother has complete control over. So, when you browse the shopping isles and you stop at your favourite bottle of wine, remember that the message from this kind of bottle is: “I am not safe for your precious, unborn baby, and my consequences will last much, much longer than my taste in your mouth”.

Acknowledgements

www.medicinenet.com/fetal_alcohol_syndrome_fas/article.htm
<http://www.intercare.co.za/articles/Fetal-alcohol-syndrome>
<http://www.mnprc.org/library/prevention-resources/topics/fetal-alcohol-spectrum-disorder>
http://www.ann7.com/article/21293-06112014lifestyle-pregnancy.html#.VbcqhOkw_LU



From Nigeria with love.

By Rev Christie Bature Ogbeifun from 180 degrees Rehabilitation Centre, Nigeria.

It was just a name from the internet, but it was unambiguous - the mission of Elim Clinic. One e-mail was enough, and I was graciously invited to see what Elim Clinic is doing. The first thing that hit me was the atmosphere; the ambience over the place. I couldn’t doubt the presence of God from the reception area, to the reception from the wonderful people who work there.

We had our dream to establish a Christian Rehabilitation Centre in the city of Port Harcourt, Nigeria. We needed to find someone who was already doing that, so we could learn and explore the possibility of collaborating in our efforts to bring hope to people, broken by addictions. We didn’t need to look any further once we found Elim Clinic. My visit to South

Africa, to Elim Clinic gave me hope that what we wanted to do was not only possible, but do-able. I found so much encouragement from the management to the least of the workers I interacted with, so much that it reduced me to tears at various times.

I returned to Nigeria and we recorded a series of financial miracles that enabled us to open the ‘180 Degrees Rehab Centre’ in January 2015, arguably the first of its kind in Nigeria. Two things I desired for the centre were the atmosphere I sensed and the model they operate with. I am glad to say, that almost all who have walked through our front door have testified of the same serenity I sensed in Elim Clinic, without being asked.

Elim Clinic has been of much help in sharing aspects of the model with us that have helped us. So far, we have had 14 patients in the Rehab at various times, and the testimonies are very encouraging. The renewed hope both in the eyes of the addicts and those of their families is so gratifying; it cannot be expressed in mere words.

We now have a team comprising of an addictions therapist, clinical psychologist, consultant psychiatrist, psychiatric and regular nurses, two pastoral counsellors and administrative staff. We are thankful for the opportunity and privilege to do what we are doing, and the part that Elim Clinic has played (and is still playing) in making our dream come true.



Christie Bature Ogbeifun

MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE By Sorika de Swardt – Addiction Consultant at Elim Clinic.

During her morning jog on a white sandy beach, journalist Theresa Osborne discovers a bottle protruding from the sand. Inside it, she finds a heartfelt, anonymous love letter. Her newspaper publishes the letter so she can track down the author. Her trip takes her to the tired-of-life widower Garret Blake who came to believe that he lost the only love of his life. The trip became a journey of rediscovering love, hope and true connection. In the romantic 1999 movie - "Message in a bottle" – they both learned to question what they thought they already knew and ended up finding love.

Sorika de Swardt



'More recently (2014) another message in a bottle brought a woman closer to her roots. Angela Erdmann aged 64, never knew her grandfather. He died in 1946, six years before she was born. She described the moment when she received a message in a bottle, 101 years after her grandfather threw it into the Baltic Sea, as extraordinary. Much of the postcard was indecipherable, although the address on the front of the card was legible, as was the author's polite request that the note be sent to his home address. She may never know what the message was, but it led her to research her family tree and discovered that her grandfather was - just like her - an open-minded, free spirited man who travelled the world, helping people wherever he went. For her, the message in a bottle led her to search and learn and eventually confirm some things, she already knew about herself.

These two stories made me think about the millions of messages we get about ourselves and the world around us. Some are subliminal,

whilst others are more direct. They come from our parents, teachers, friends, society, God, religion and nature. 'Our conscious mind can receive only up to 20 details out of thousands every single moment. We choose particular pieces of data, based on what we think is relevant for us. Just imagine how many options there are, and how many opportunities we might miss. If our mind is programmed to think negatively, the consciousness will most likely skip options that does not fit our paradigm. Luckily the brain doesn't lose all of the background information, instead it archives it in the subconscious and only screens to the conscious mind based on our paradigms and beliefs.

So what do we do with our conscious messages? Do we just latch onto them and believe them without ever questioning or challenging them, much like Garret Blake in the start of the movie? Or do we use the messages we get as energy that drives us to search more, learn more, and find new things about ourselves and those

around us? In this we can exercise choice.

When an alcoholic looks at the beer bottle in his hand, what does it tell him about himself? Does it say "you are not good enough, undeserving of good things and without hope that things may ever change"? Does it tell him that life is too painful without the numbing that the alcohol brings? That God and others could never forgive you for things you have done or become? If this is what alcohol, food, gambling, pornography or anything else tells you, I challenge you today to reconsider what you think you know. I challenge you to open yourself up to other options and messages. To the possibility that there may be hope, recovery, love, forgiveness and opportunity on the other side of your addiction and pain. I want to encourage you with the words of Christie Ogbeifun (*From Nigeria with love*) that what looks impossible, is not only possible, but do-able. I pray that you find, like Mike Mavambi, that when desperation turns into dedication, there is always hope and meaningful life. Just for today, challenge what you think you know?

1 <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/04/07/oldest-message-in-a-bottle>

2 <https://www.vortex-success.com/subliminal-messages/what-messages-do-we-get/>

THE NEW FACE OF ELIM CLINIC – A point of view By Francesca Thomas of Mullen House

Vision is the art of seeing the impossible and making it possible. Mullen House Design believes designing is an emotive art to be led by a point of view and not just a look. Elim Clinic prides itself in providing state of the art programs and has undertaken bringing their facilities in line with their programs in order to propel it into the 21st century. Step inside the sophisticated understated Elim Clinic building and you will notice something surreal has begun. The beginning of a new era at Elim Clinic.

Mullen House Design in collaboration with Elim Clinic has begun the first phase of renovations and set out to create a space to be in, an experience in its own right. To create a meaningful environment that suggests possibilities and stimulate awareness that compliments their clients and their lifestyle. We are creating a look based on the meme that simplicity is the ultimate form of sophistication.

It has long been documented that one's surroundings has a profound effect on one's mood. The hues of soft greys have been used around the space, to create a calm and collected feel. Coupling with straight lines along with the appreciation of natural elements is our incubation of our vision. The building has been used as a canvas for art to come. Having commissioned artwork by renowned artist namely but not limited to Louis Olivier and Laurel Holmes. Within a few weeks from date one will walk into a revived reception with modern furnishings accompanied by investment art laid out on a modern wood flooring.

Care and great thought has gone into every detail to create a space that reflects the state of the art programs offered at Elim and to uplift patients alike. Be sure to come and pay the Clinic a visit in days to come, so you can feel, and see for yourself how our vision takes shape.

INSPIRATION OF LOOK AND FEEL



CLOSER TOGETHER OR FURTHER APART?

Digital Devices and the New Generation Gap By Robert Weiss LCSW, CSAT-S

Last week Chuck and Janet Bloom gave their only daughter a night off by taking their grandchildren out for dinner. Both were looking forward to a playful evening with the kids. As soon as they sat at the table, even before the menus appeared, they noted with dismay that their beloved grandkids were more engaged with and attentive to their holiday-acquired digital devices than to their loving, pizza-partying grandparents. Feeling frustrated, hurt, and angry - like they might as well have dined alone - Chuck and Janet quietly launched into a discussion about how these devices are ruining not just their three grandkids, but young people in general.

At the very same moment and just one table over, half a dozen 20-something work friends were seated, also preparing to order pizza. Just one look over at that crowd affirmed Chuck and Janet's worries about a "lost generation." At that table, two of the diners amicably swapped office gossip, but the others were as engaged with their digital devices as the aforementioned grandkids. What Chuck and Janet failed to notice was that no one at this second table seemed even remotely concerned or bothered by the fact that technology held as much sway as actual people.

So, why were Chuck and Janet seething about the "digital snub" from their grandchildren, while everyone at the other table managed to enjoy themselves, completely unruffled by the ever-shifting sands of live conversation, texting, tweeting and posting? In great part this difference stems from the fact that Chuck and Janet are digital immigrants, while their grandkids and the 20-somethings one table over are all digital natives. Different generations divided by different definitions of personal respect, attentiveness, interpersonal communication and what constitutes a meaningful relationship.

Digital Natives vs. Digital Immigrants

Generally speaking, digital natives unquestioningly value and appreciate the role that digital technology plays in their lives, whereas digital immigrants hold mixed views on the subject. Not surprisingly, thanks to continual advances in digital technology, the separation between digital natives and digital immigrants is widening almost by the day, resulting not so much in a generation gap as a generation chasm.

This new generation gap is evident in practically every facet of modern life. For instance, there are extreme differences in the ways digital natives and digital immigrants conduct business, gather news and information and spend their paychecks. They also differ significantly in the ways they define personal privacy, experience entertainment and socially engage. Simply put, in a mere 25 years our basic forms of interpersonal communication and interaction have been drastically

reformatted, and those who prefer the old ways of mostly face-to-face contact often feel left out and unappreciated.

In some ways this new generation gap sounds a lot like every other generation gap in history. However, previous generation gaps have mostly centred on young people vocally, visually and in-real-time challenging the beliefs and experiences of their elders. Today, the divide is more about the fact that young people neither see nor hear their elders because, from a communications standpoint, the two generations are not in the same room. For instance, in the pizza restaurant Chuck and Janet are "present" and interacting at the dinner table, while their grandkids are "present" and interacting in a completely different, entirely digital universe. In some ways, this means that Chuck and Janet are dinosaurs. Basically, because they're not texting, tweeting or posting to social media, they're not effectively communicating with their grandkids.

Connection/Disconnection

Interestingly, many digital natives think that young people are isolated and disconnected and more interested in machines than people. In reality, nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, no generation in history has been more interconnected than Generations Y and Z. Statistics readily back this up. One study found that in 2009 more than half of American teens logged on to a social media site at least once per day, and nearly a quarter logged on 10 or more times per day. In the same year, a study by the Pew Internet and American Life Project found that more than three-quarters of U.S. teens owned a cellphone, with 88% texting regularly. Boys were sending and receiving 30 texts per day, with girls averaging 80. A more recent Pew study, this one conducted in 2012, finds these numbers are rising rapidly among every Gen Y and Z demographic. This same survey also reveals that texting is now the primary mode of communication between teens and their friends and family, far surpassing phone calls, emails, and face-to-face interactions. Depending on your age and point of view, of course, this may or may not be a bad thing.

Talk Versus Text: Does It Matter?

It is possible that human interactions are no less meaningful or productive simply because they are digital rather than face-to-face. It is also possible the exact opposite is true. Frankly, it depends more on those doing the communicating than anything else. Most often, digital immigrants tend to want/need/prefer in-person, live interactions or at least telephone conversations where they can hear the other person's voice. Digital natives, on the other hand, seem to feel that communication is communication, no

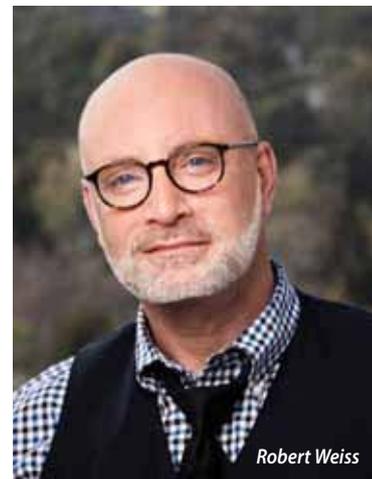
matter the venue. To them, it seems silly to wait until they run into someone when they can text that person right now and get an instant response.

They ask: "Why would I be disconnected when I can post, tweet and text to let my family and friends know what I'm doing and what I need, and they can do the same with me?" This, of course, is the crux of the current generation gap - shifting from a fully analog world to one that is increasingly digital.

In my recently released book *Closer Together, Further Apart*, my co-author Jennifer Schneider and I note that in today's world the best communicators are those who are willing and able to engage other people in whatever venue is most appropriate and useful at the time. They neither avoid nor insist on a particular mode of interaction. Instead, they work hard to make sure their message is fully understood by the intended audience no matter what. In other words, they embrace the idea that they need to live and communicate fluently in both the digital and analog worlds. As technology evolves, so do good communicators, and they do so without forgetting or discounting what has worked in the past, remaining constantly aware of the fact that some people may prefer the older methodology, while others prefer the new.

Unfortunately, as has always been the case when changes in technology have swiftly and profoundly affected our day-to-day lives, many people, young and old alike, become entrenched in the belief that "the way we do it is the best way." The simple truth is that cultural/technological assimilation is rarely an easy task. Sometimes it can feel easier to judge and avoid, rather than to embrace and evolve. Thus we have the current communications-driven generation gap. That said, the effort of reaching out beyond our generational comfort zone is usually well worth the effort.

Robert Weiss will be visiting Elim Clinic in March 2016 to offer CPD training and will be the keynote speaker at the Launch of "The new face of addiction programme" hosted by Elim Clinic. He will speak on the topic of technology, relationships and sexual addiction. Make sure to put the date of the launch i.e. 15th March 2016 in your diary and look out for the invitation and programme in the November 2015 newsletter. For more information on Robert Weiss please visit this link: <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/robert-weiss/>



Robert Weiss



DESPERATION TURNED INTO DEDICATION

By Mike Mavambi (ex-student of Elim Clinic)

My name is Mike Mavambi and I grew up in an alcoholic family in a Zimbabwean village. My parents divorced when my mother was twenty-six years of age and she turned to alcohol to numb the emotional pain. After the divorce we moved to my grandparents' village. They were also alcoholics, so at the age of six, I first experienced passing out from alcohol. Alcohol to us, was both food and drink as we grew up in those dark villages of Zimbabwe where chaos and abuse changed us deeply.

At fifteen I gave my life to Jesus and for the very first time I lived a new life that brought confidence and a feeling of self-worth. All the memories of abuse and rejection faded away as years in God's presence healed me. My mother studied to become a secondary school teacher in mathematics and she proudly taught for seven years. In my first year at technical college, my mother died, and with her death, hope started to slip away from me again. The following year my grandfather, who supported my studies financially, succumbed to prostate cancer and died. A year later my father, who never cared for me, died as well.

In the midst of death, loss and depression, God blessed me with a wife, two sons, a political career and a successful business. God turned my life around 360 degrees. The village boy became a flamboyant businessman. It took me eight year to build an empire. Paradoxically, in less than two years, gambling and alcohol reduced me to a divorcee and a heavily indebted lonely shadow of a man. During the destruction time I tried to change: friends, girlfriends, cities and anything I suspected to be responsible for my downfall. I never changed myself though. I remarried and had a handsome son and a beautiful daughter, but I have no good memories of these times.

Two and a half years of self-imposed gambling abstinence helped me pay my debts and restore my sanity. I continued drinking as I thought it was my gambling, childhood history and my wife that took away my peace, and my money. If I knew I was the problem and I needed to do something about myself, this may very well have been a different story. I took my first gambling bet again in September 2012. In three weeks of insanity, I gambled and drank myself into destitution. When the National Responsible Gambling programme of South Africa offered admission to Elim Clinic, I was convinced it would be a waste of time. Unless they gave me money and negotiated with those I wronged, it was not worth it.

Nevertheless, on the 5th of October 2012 I was admitted. God had a plan.

I learned so much in three weeks, things I wish I knew earlier in my life. I vividly remember the 25th of October 2012 when my therapist asked the Clinic's kitchen staff to allow me to eat one last supper before I would be discharged into the unfamiliar streets of Kempton Park.

One day at a time I survived hunger and homelessness. By God's grace I kept coming to aftercare at the Clinic. Most important on these aftercare meetings, was the fact that I could eat fresh sandwiches and drink hot coffee. A fellow friend introduced me to Alcoholics Anonymous (AA). More coffee and biscuits. Unfortunately, these two meetings were held on the same day and as such I could only eat as much as I could that day only. I attended these programs by desperation, but before I knew, it was by dedication!

Today I am more than two years sober and I am still a grateful member of both Elim Clinic's aftercare, as well as the AA. I have my family back. I am grateful to God and my beautiful wife for forgiveness. I live in serenity and fear of the Lord. One day at a time works for me and when life throws anything to my side, I know there is a God who cares and that there is always hope.



Forthcoming events

Come and join Elim Clinic's 13th Annual Golf day on the 22nd October 2015.

For more information please contact us on info@elimclin.co.za

We are launching the "new face of addiction" and the "new face of Elim Clinic" on the 15th March 2015. Put this date in your diary to make sure you don't miss out on this prestigious event.

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Website: www.elimclin.co.za

Donations

We thank our sponsors for their contributions and continued support.

- Dr R Els and E Els from the Emily Fuchs Foundation.
- Ms C Oelofse from Keybase Training Solutions.
- Mr K Schoeman and Mr K Fourie from Schoeman Boerdery (Edms) Bpk.



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