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February 2018

# KEYS TO RECOVERY — NEWSPAPER, INC. —

## ALCOHOLIC & ADOPTEE



*Written by: Miguel Caballero*

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to Solutions**

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## About Us

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Welcome to the February 2018 issue of "Keys to Recovery Newspaper".

Once again we have been blessed with a great feature article, "Alcoholic and Adoptee", written by Miguel Caballero. Miguel has shared not only his experience, strength, and hope with us, he has shared his heart. I find it very interesting that the international symbol (for adoption), is a triangle (similar to AA triangle) intertwined with a heart. The triangle represents the triad: the birth mother, the child, and the adoptive parents. They are all connected by the heart which represents love. Is that Odd or is that God?

We want to thank Dr. Nita, for her 4 years of contributions to "Keys to Recovery Newspaper". Her column "Ask Dr. Nita", has been one of our most popular columns. Dr. Nita will be taking a vacation, so to speak, from her monthly column. "There's a New Doctor in Town", written by Dr. Clinton Weyand, will be the replacement column. It's a must read, and I'm sure will become a fast favorite. We will miss you Dr. Nita.

"Keys to Recovery Newspaper", is gearing up for our first, in a series of three, book signing/networking events. The first event will feature both Luis J. Rodriguez and Freddy Negrete. In our January issue we read and reviewed the book "Always Running" by Luis J. Rodriguez. Our January feature article, written by Steve Jones, outlined a bit about Freddy Negrete, and the book Steve and Freddy co-authored "Smile Now Cry Later", which we read and reviewed in our December 2017 issue.

After meeting these modern day heroes, and reading their books, we knew they had to be our first authors featured in our book signing series. This is an event you do not want to miss. We feel blessed to be able to celebrate both Luis and Freddy. Please join us for this once in a lifetime event.

Here at "Keys to Recovery Newspaper", our primary purpose is to spread the message of hope of recovery from all addictions and disorders. However, we also believe that God steps in and shows us different facilities and individuals that we can be a blessing to. We have met so many wonderful people, while doing the work we believe God has led us to do, and for that we are grateful. Thank you to everyone who makes this possible, month after month, year after year. We give all the glory to God. - Jeannie Marshall, President & Cofounder

Hello everyone, I hope that this new year starts off well for you in regards to accomplishing your resolutions.

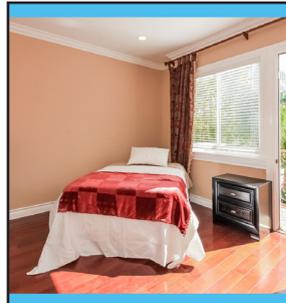
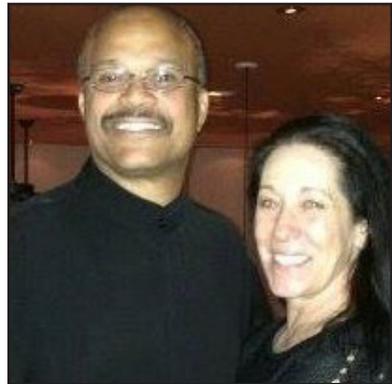
I on the other hand, have sporadically completed my behavioral modification, so to speak. One of my defects of character is not thinking everything through before I "react", and saying what may not be appropriately deserved.

I have to infuse God in ALL of my affairs, even in the smallest of matters and not just the major ones. What may appear minor and insignificant to us at the time, is viewed differently coming from those we sometime inadvertently hurt with our words. It is said that the hardest thing to tame is the tongue, it can build one up or tear them down.

In essence I'm a pretty nice guy, modestly speaking, but yet there are times I speak without envisioning what my response might create. I'm focusing my attention on being considerate, spiritual, and uplifting whenever I speak in response to whatever has been said to me. I can't control what others say, but I can control how I react to what's said, when I apply God's principals.

I have an incredible life, I have a beautiful wife who has the same burning desire to be of service, and help as many people in need as possible. Through our positive actions and behaviors, coupled with love and compassion, we show that we have a higher power governing our lives. We are a recovery family that respects and supports one another, until the next time, may God bless you.

Marcus Marshall, Vice President & Cofounder



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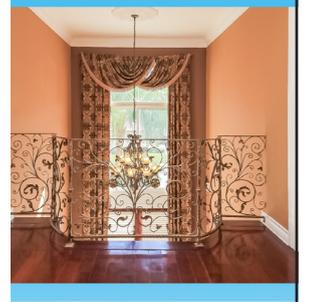


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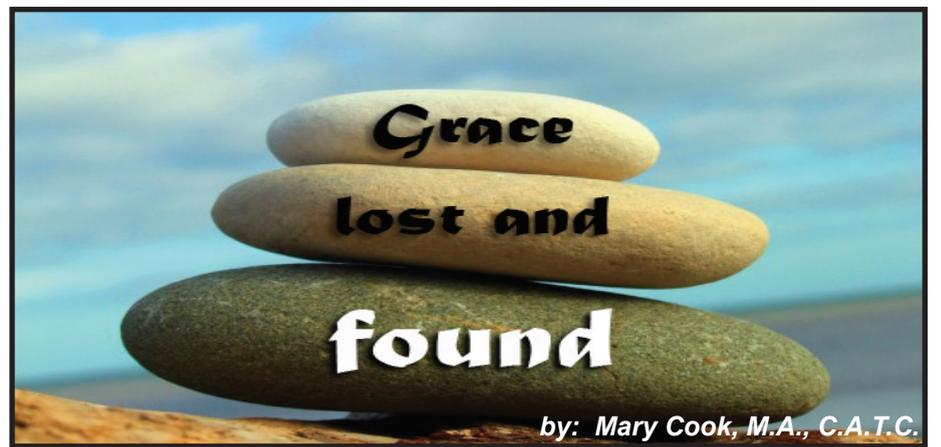
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**FROM SYMPTOMS TO SOLUTIONS**

Our minds chatter constantly, demanding attention. Then we become lost in thought and life passes us by. Our minds tell us that we have an impossible number of things to do, then say hurry up, you're way behind. While taking care of one task, our minds recite long lists of what else to do. Then the mind accuses us of not concentrating, and doing things wrong. We are called names by our own mind that we wouldn't accept from anyone else. Minds like to obsess on problems. They even fabricate them in our rare moments of contentment. Then they give us solutions that create more problems than the original circumstances. If we confront our minds for not doing a better job, suddenly the mind is no longer an expert, and becomes muddled and confused.

Our bodies give us cravings to eat or drink when we are not hungry, or thirsty. Bodies can tell us that we need sex in the most inappropriate situations. They can be too anxious to sleep, or too exhausted to get out of bed, or vice versa. Energy in our bodies is commonly excessive or depleted. We are often tense with aches in our head, neck, shoulders or back. Our bodies are easily addicted to sugar, salt, caffeine, fats, nicotine, alcohol, other drugs, and medications. Then we contract diseases from these addictions. Our bodies want to take elevators, escalators, and park as close as possible to where we're going. Then they want exercise, so we go to the gym to walk or run on a treadmill or stair-master.

Our spirits often feel broken or lost. We give up Heavenly dreams in deference to the defeatist list of endless duties to perform. We allow empty rituals and short order prayers to replace real communion with God. Fear of celestial retaliation can get us to church, but not make us behave well outside of church. It's too hard to hang on to awe and wonder in the face of hatred and violence. It's too difficult to maintain excitement and joy in the depths of abandonment, and depression. Fear builds a fortress that shuts out serenity. We feel hollow and fill ourselves up with superficial matters, compulsions, and addictions. We hide from our spirit, then forget that we have one.

We have symptoms, from physical problems, mental duress, depression, anxiety, or spiritual confusion. We take drugs for our symptoms which create more symptoms, requiring more drugs. There is never enough time, because we're not in the moment to experience its' fullness. Love is often lost to lust, selfishness, violence, fear, or obligation. We chase financial wealth and pernicious power, and miss the treasures of our heart and the miracles of our soul. We were created whole, yet we chronically feel incomplete. We opt for quick fixes that sabotage lasting fulfillment. We are slaves to the greed of sensory and ego gratification, and diminished by divisive, corrupt public policies and leaders, at the cost of our health, and the health of the planet.

These are fundamental problems. They are intertwined with all the aspects of ourselves, and how we perceive our environment. The health of our mind, body and spirit determines the quality of how we live and love, which affects everything around us. We were created to be self-healing, evolving organisms, nourishing life around us and sustained by higher grace. We can recapture this rich heritage by understanding, strengthening, balancing, and integrating mind, body, and spirit.

We must learn to fully engage with ourselves and our lives in deep, meaningful ways. Internal struggle and stress tells us we need to surrender what is toxic, whether thoughts, feelings, or actions. We cannot experience a full life without letting go of what is no longer internally, or externally useful, healthy, or valuable. We must create space for fresh, rejuvenating energy. Our life goals cannot be accomplished without identifying, and relinquishing the habit beliefs and actions, which impede progress. It is open-mindedness, willingness, and periods of peaceful stillness that allow us to learn and grow.

Our healthiest focus is relaxing into the present moment, which has a calming effect, making us less vulnerable to mental chatter and cravings. A healthy mind includes higher consciousness. It is a balance of right and left brain hemispheric information. Deep reflection, creativity, intuition, and meditation are just as important as analysis, logic, common sense, and healthy habits. The experience of serenity, silence and stillness in meditation refreshes our mind, just as good sleep refreshes our body. Meditation can transform scattered thoughts, anxiety, and stress into free flowing, smooth, relaxing energy. A healthy mind accepts the present moment, discards unhelpful old ideas, and welcomes new revelations.

Healthy physical care-taking nourishes a strong desire to live, thrive and enjoy optimal health. We understand and appreciate how our body works, and all that it does for us. We balance gratification of the body's desires with the larger, long-range perspective of what is healthiest for us. We learn to sense where energy is depleted, excessive or blocked, and correct these imbalances. We eat fresh, natural foods free of chemicals and undue processing, and drink good water. We alternate activity and physical exercise with relaxation and sleep. We spend time outdoors observing, appreciating and interacting with the beauty of the natural world. We experience more positive energy and gratitude for the earth, and its inhabitants.

A healthy spirit engages in a relationship with God, which positively changes all other relationships. It is giving from the source of all goodness that fills us and unites us, in all circumstances, for God is greater than all circumstances.

*Con't Page 22*

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## OUR WAY OF LIFE

AA was originally designed to produce freedom, both from our alcohol addiction and from our spiritual malady, through a spiritual awakening. Then we are invited to model that freedom for others through a personal outreach structure. How effective are you/we today?

Based on my 34 years of experience, there are many wonderful and helpful components to support the initial approach to recovery in any 12 Step Program:

- Attending and participating in a variety of Twelve Step meetings;
- Taking and performing commitments at those meetings;
- Having and regularly attending a home group;
- Getting and fostering an effective relationship with an experienced sponsor;
- Obtaining and reading the literature, especially the books Alcoholics Anonymous and Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions;
- Knowing and understanding the Twelve Steps.

But these, singularly or cumulatively, are NOT the antidote to “unmanageability” – the spiritual malady. The “Big Book” Alcoholics Anonymous suggests that living “Our Way of Life”, is the formula for the “daily reprieve”, the application of Steps 10, 11, & 12, DAILY.

Thinking that one can sustain the Step Twelve promise of a Spiritual Awakening by reading the Twelve Step literature, sitting in meetings, and discussing it with our sponsor, is like sitting in our garage, reading the auto manual with our mechanic, and expecting the car to stay fixed.

My understanding of the AA “program of recovery”, which addresses our addiction(s), is a series of suggested personal actions described precisely in the Big Book:

### 1. We establish a relationship with:

Power: Steps 1-3 = our experience of “no choice”; then our choice about and for Power;

Self: Steps 4-7 = our identification & removal of the obstacles in us to Power;

Others: Steps 8-9 = our willingness to change & to repair the damage we caused others.

It is a process based on a sequence of rigorous actions...

Prayer • Reading • Reflection • Writing • Discussion

... leading to the experience of the promised Spiritual Awakening. We are changed!

### 2. We foster and maintain these relationships through a consistent daily practice of:

Step 10: Inventory = Examining our disturbances and resulting behavior “on the spot”;

Step 11: Prayer & Meditation = “Improving” consciousness twice a day = a.m. and p.m.;

Step 12: Principles & Service = “enlarging” consciousness through compassion.

In Step 10 the Big Book confirms that “We have entered the world of the Spirit”, and confirms that “... we vigorously commence this way of living as we clean up the past”. When we start making our Step Nine amends we begin living “Our Way of Life”: Steps 10, 11, & 12.

Although the “program of recovery” is not meetings or sponsorship, it is greatly facilitated and supported by both. However, going to meetings and talking to a sponsor will not produce, or sustain the necessary personal Spiritual Awakening. This experience is the single promise of reaching Step Twelve. The “program of recovery” is a process of establishing, and then maintaining an effective personal relationship with Power, our self, and with others.

The litmus test and sure evidence of an individual having experienced this Spiritual Awakening, is a personality transformation – a measurable, visible change in thinking, feeling, and especially behavior. This conversion experience is positively disproportionate to the amount of work done by that individual – bigger than that person’s contribution warrants by itself. It is done TO us not BY us.

We are not “cured”; we have a “daily reprieve”. We sustain this awakening by practicing “OUR WAY OF LIFE”: Steps 10, 11, & 12. This work promises to provide “immunity” from the spiritual malady. The consistent message throughout the text book is the need for, and benefits of turning from self-centeredness to other-centeredness.

Could it be the classic “human problem”: loss of focus and the complacency of an easier, softer way? Has there been a gradual growth of an AA culture that perpetuates the misunderstanding of what is the “program of recovery”; ...of what is really meant by “unmanageability” and “daily reprieve”?

Has the spirit of fellowship replaced the Fellowship of the Spirit?

Perhaps the solution is to get back to basics. What did the first 100 do? They submitted to a process of ego deflation and personal transformation, which freed them from alcohol by giving them a relationship with Power. They fostered their new power by helping others experience a Spiritual Awakening through this same conversion process – giving them a daily reprieve; helping them maintain and improve their spiritual condition through a practice of “our way of life”; growing personally in “understanding and effectiveness”.

Let’s use our current spirit of fellowship to return to our roots of Fellowship of Spirit:

1. Accessing Power through the Big Book’s precise “program of recovery” experienced in the Steps;

Con’t Page 22



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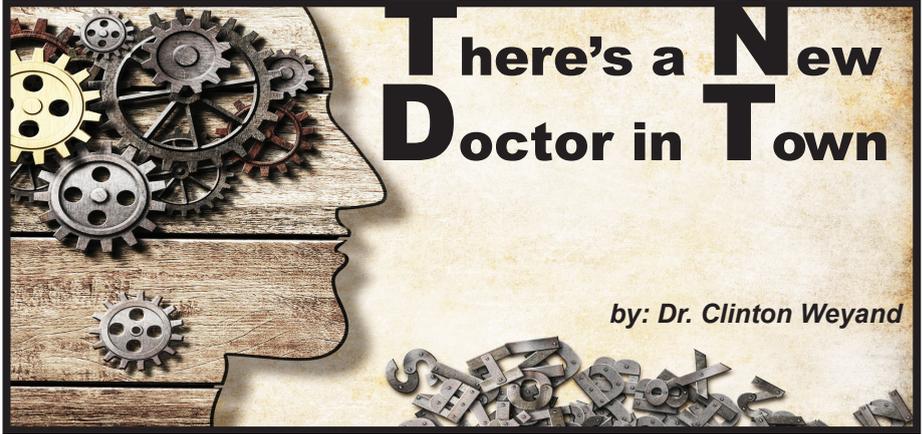


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# There's a New Doctor in Town

*by: Dr. Clinton Weyand*

Dear Doctor Clint:  
I have been struggling with severe depression and alcoholism for many years. The more counselors I see, the more confused I get. Am I self-medicating my depression with alcohol, or is my depression a symptom of my alcohol use?? Also, do I have a mood disorder or maybe even a depressive personality disorder? I am resentful toward the entire system, because I have spent too much time, energy, and money to still be struggling at this level.  
Sincerely, Steve M.

Dear Steve,  
The first thing I have to say is don't blame yourself. This history of dual diagnosis treatment is not a pretty one, and it is filled with much misinformation and turf battles between professionals; psychiatrists, and addiction counselors. Traditionally, one disorder could be identified as "primary", and the other disorder as "secondary." Frequently, psychiatrists and social workers believed that if they successfully treated the primary problem of depression, the alcoholism and addiction would then go away. Many addiction counselors had the opposite belief, once the addiction stopped, the psychological problem of depression would go away. Today, in the Age of Biological Psychiatry, we have new technologies which tell us both problems need to be treated simultaneously; and hopefully, with an integrated treatment team where everybody is on the same page.

Also, many clients with co-existing problems have been erroneously stigmatized as "difficult patients." This was another sad mistake in the history of psychotherapy. Even clients with personality disorders can be effectively treated with DBT, EMDR, Solution-Focused Therapy and Narrative Therapy. Medications exist which work on the receptor sites in the brain, but that is another discussion.

With co-occurring disorders, one important dynamic is dovetailing; where the problems are feeding into each other, and making all problems difficult to treat. Here are some examples:

1. Narcissistic Personality Disorder and Cocaine Use;
2. Restricting anorexia and amphetamine dependence.
3. Bipolar Disorder with Polysubstance Dependence.
4. Generalized Anxiety Disorder with Cannabis Abuse.
5. Social Phobia with alcohol abuse.

Once we see the connections between all these problems and all these issues, we see the necessity for rigorous honesty and deep exploration, coupled with commitment (and the Steps must be worked with religious devotion.)

These multiple problems can be mastered and/or contained, but it requires excellent and flexible doctors, therapists, counselors, and sponsors.

My personal belief is that many "chronic relapsers" have not received adequate assessment, or adequate treatment. The skills of all health care providers are tested where co-occurring disorders are presented.

When the missing ingredient or hidden factor is finally identified and dealt with, clients begin to experience rapid movement on the Recovery Road. There is Hope when clients have identified all the key issues.

*Dr. Weyand studied Community Clinical Psychology at the baccalaureate and graduate level at CSUN where he graduated Magna Cum Laude. He then studied Counseling Psychology at the Doctorate level at USC. He is also a graduate of the Addiction Studies program at Pierce College. Dr. Weyand has 30+ years of experience working in recovery and behavioral healthcare. He began his career at Woodview Calabasas Psychiatric Hospital as the Assistant Administrator, and Director of Community Services. He was Director of the Adult Unit at Van Nuys Psychiatric Hospital for over 10 years, where he worked with troubled adolescents and adults.*

*For Appointments or Consultations, he can be reached at (818) 341-0283 or (818) 800-4814.*

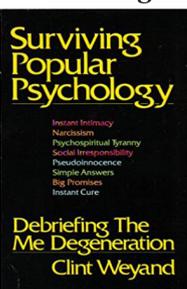


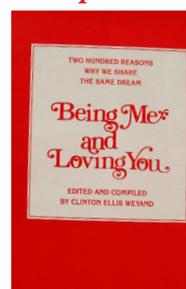
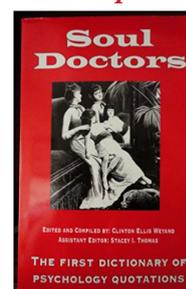

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Dr. Clinton Weyand has over 30 years of experience working in behavioral healthcare. His career began in Psychology at Woodview Calabasas Psychiatric Hospital. Then for 10 years he served as the Director of the Adult Unit at Van Nuys Psychiatric Hospital. He also specializes in working with dual-disorder clients.



## DO THE NEXT RIGHT THING

For years, I remained trapped inside the prison of my own mind, attempting to battle my horrific demon known as anorexia. I was merely the hollow shell of the girl I used to be, fighting for the life I knew I deserved. My eyes were lifeless, my heart was heavy, and my brain was consumed by thoughts of self-destruction. I thought that tearing my body down to its lowest possible point would somehow bring me the confidence, happiness, and self-acceptance I was desperately seeking. I hopelessly tried to ignore for the sadness I was feeling in my life, by obeying that monster in my head - the voice that was promising to save me.

My brain seemed to be stuck in black and white. There were no shades of gray, or deviations from the master plan that my eating disorder set for me. My most difficult hurdle to overcome was understanding that after a bad day, or major setback in my own recovery, a fresh start did not need to wait until the dawning of a new day, or the start of a fresh week, it could begin immediately with a deep breath, a moment of meditation, or a soft smile.

When we stumble over the hurdles of recovery, it does not mean that we must abandon our journey, and turn back to the chains of that disorder. A misstep does not have the power to strip away the progress we have made up until that point. Do not wait for tomorrow, next week or next month to start over. Start now, in this moment. Do the next right thing.

This concept seemed simple to comprehend, yet proved to be extremely challenging for me to fulfill in the midst of my struggles with my eating disorder. When I found myself slipping off track, my initial reaction was to immediately accept defeat and try again another day. I would hang my head and allow my self-doubt to take the lead. I came to find that this 'all or nothing' mentality was not beneficial, but rather extremely injurious to my recovery.

I soon realized that my journey did not need to be pristine, in order to bring me to a place of happiness and contentment. I came to find that the scars and blemishes I acquired along the way, are what proved to me that I was stronger, smarter, and more resilient than my demons, because in spite of my struggles, I did not give up.

Doing the next right thing in recovery from an eating disorder is an all-encompassing statement. It involves the practice of letting go of the things that impede our growth, while simultaneously reminding ourselves that a resilient mind is one of life's most admirable assets. It means falling off the wagon at 8 A.M., and getting right back on at 8:01. It entails taking one step back, but immediately taking two more steps forward. Doing the next right thing does not have to be a monumental feat or a newsworthy event, but rather standing tall in the face of defeat, and keeping your feet firmly planted on the path to self-betterment.

I didn't wake up one morning and decide "today is the day I am going to recover." It's not a 1-day, or even 1-year, process. It's forever ongoing. But it takes a spark to ignite the fire. It took the anger and frustration of my grueling life to push me to the edge, and it took determination to make me take the leap. It wasn't a small jump, or a hesitant nudge, but rather a brave, aggressive, and whole-hearted leap. I wasn't going to lose my life to a ruthless demon. I wasn't put on this earth just to suffer. I needed to fight. And while my journey from that point on wasn't perfect, at least I was moving.

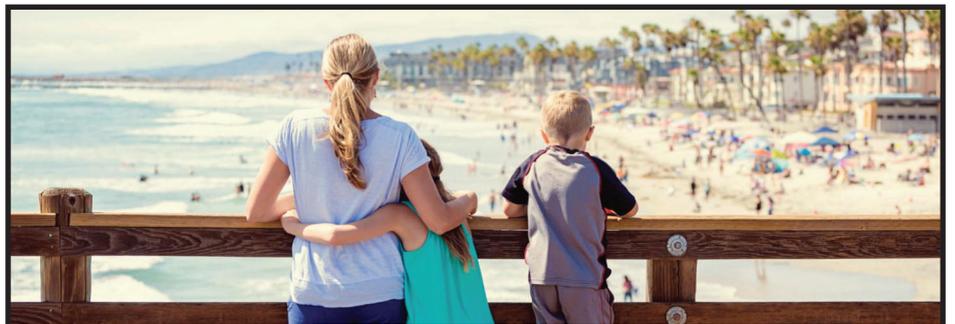
We tend to fall into this black and white mind-set, when we place ourselves under pressure to be the face of a "perfect" recovery. No recovery is perfect, but this imperfection is what makes it so special. It is in moments of error that we develop wisdom, and in struggle that we find strength. Our journey to recovery is unique, tailored to the heart and soul of the person beneath the outer shell. Recovery is not a 'one size fits all' approach, but rather a moveable, breathable model that allows room for flexibility and freedom.

We have the freewill to decide what is best for us, but one piece of advice I can offer that truly never fails, is that in moments of seeming defeat, do the next right thing. Get back on the horse, and go. We do not have to go fast nor far, we just have to keep moving.

Hannah Durbin has built herself up from the rock bottom of her life-threatening battle with anorexia to become a bright ray of hope for all suffering with mental illness. Through her Instagram account, personal blog, and features in major news publications, including the Daily Mail and the Daily Mirror, she has transparently portrayed her ongoing journey, to a life of health and happiness. In achieving a full recovery from anorexia, depression, and anxiety, she has taken it upon herself to emphasize the resilience of the human spirit, and its ability to overcome all battles. Her mission is to help others discover their strength.



Hannah is the President of Project Heal Elon - a non-profit organization created to raise awareness of eating disorders, promote healthy body image and self-esteem, provide treatment funding for those who cannot afford it, and serve as a testament that full recovery from an eating disorder is possible. In addition, she is the intern for Jenni Schaefer, one of the top-leading influencers in the field of eating recovery. She will be graduating from Elon University in 5/2018. Email her at: [itshealthyhappyhannah@gmail.com](mailto:itshealthyhappyhannah@gmail.com).



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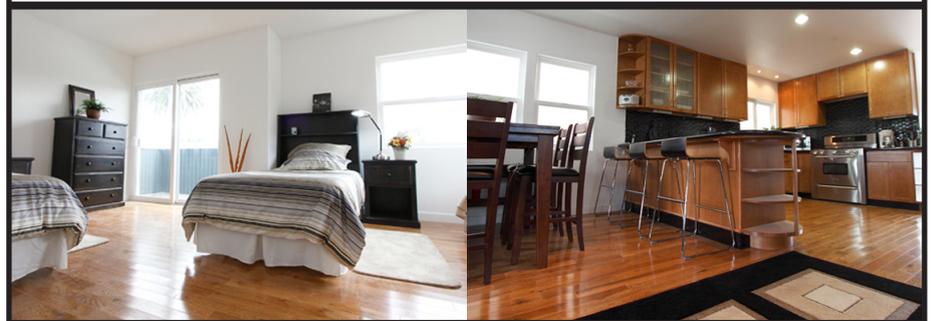
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by: Brian Cuban

## MY FIRST 12-STEP MEETING

Addiction is not a choice, but recovery is. If you need help, there are options out there for you to pursue.

When I walked into my first 12-step meeting (Alcoholics Anonymous is the most well-known) in April 2007 fresh off a two-day drug- and alcohol-induced blackout, I'd been seeing a psychiatrist for a few years. My view on therapy was simple. Admit nothing. Talk about nothing consequential, lie when necessary. Get my antidepressant prescription. I sometimes get asked, "Why would you lie to your therapist?, Why would you even go if you didn't want help?, You're paying the guy!", I wanted help but was not in a position to accept help. I was not in a position to face my past. I was ashamed, of my present and of my past. Shame knows no hourly rate.

This day would be different. I'd thought about not going, but I knew that I had to do something or the pressure would increase to go to rehab. Some step forward had to be taken. I wanted to take it, but I was also terrified. I'd never experienced such fear. Fear of losing my girlfriend and family. Fear of a life without drugs, alcohol, and what seemed like a near constant state of deep depression. Fear of rigorous honesty — something I'd never been a fan of, either as a lawyer or in my personal life.

My psychiatrist asked, "Have you heard of Alcoholics Anonymous? There is a group that meets right next door to this office."

I looked at him skeptically. "Yeah, I drive by there, They all look like homeless people and stereo bums. They smoke. I hate smokers." There is always a reason to not recover.

"No, Brian, there are all kinds of people who attend. Even lawyers. If you're adamant about not going to treatment, I think it's a good place to start. If it doesn't take, then we can revisit in-patient treatment. There's actually a meeting starting in a little bit. Let's end the session, and you can go over there and check it out."

Once again, I was resistant. I brought up my "law practice." I'm a lawyer. I have clients who need attending to. I'm a busy guy. I'm above such things as 12-step in grimy, smoke-filled rooms of despair. (In reality, I had no clients left.) I remember his response as if it were yesterday. "Brian, yes, you have a law degree. Yes, you sometimes go through some of the motions of what being a lawyer looks like. But you are not a lawyer in this room. You have an addiction. And this is a good first step for many addicts. I don't know if it'll work for you. But for now, it costs nothing but a walk over there, and an hour to just listen."

As he was giving me the dose of reality, my wheels were turning with the fantasy. What I heard was, "You don't have to go away to treatment." It's anonymous. Nobody will know. I could take the smallest of steps and stay in my comfort zone. What I didn't know then was that even the smallest of steps into recovery are okay. In reality, even a small step can be life-changing.

I walk up to the door of the building where the local 12-step meetings are held.

After pacing around outside the door for a long time, I finally peer in, down the long hallway to where people are gathering. I'm afraid of being recognized. My ego is still paramount in my worries.

When I finally work up the courage to walk into the building, each step into the unknown seems harder and harder. Who are the people I'll meet in 12-step? My mind flashes back to one of my favorite childhood movies, Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory. I suddenly imagine that as soon as I enter the 12-step meeting room, I'll be carried away by a team of chanting Oompa Loompas determined to punish me for my bad habits. I have no desire to meet the Oompa Loompas on the other side of that door. I again consider rehab, but I'm even more embarrassed about the idea of my friends, other lawyers, and everyone who knows my family name finding out I'm going to in-patient rehab, than I am about a small group of strangers scrutinizing my deepest flaws.

I finally make it to the door of the meeting room, and I can smell the fumes of stale cigarette smoke, and day-old coffee. My eyes lock onto the 1950's tile floor, ingrained with the dirt of countless feet. There are other people milling around in the hall. Are these the people with whom I am supposed to share my darkest secrets? Will I be made fun of, teased, bullied, insulted? Who are these people? Skid-row bums? That's my perception of 12-step. I think of Nicolas Cage's character, Ben, living in the sleazy "no-tell motel" as he drinks himself to death in Leaving Las Vegas, and Dick Van Dyke's character, Charlie, drunk, alone on the beach with no future in The Morning After.

Still not ready, I walk back to my car, and I sit there with the key in the ignition. I even start the engine. But I don't go anywhere. Instead, I think about my next move. It's all on me. My therapist couldn't save me. Addiction is not a choice, but recovery is.

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Con't Page 22



## THE PATH TO THE GREATEST LOVE OF ALL

February is here and love is in the air, as they say. We know its a time for planning that ultimate date. Or for some it may feel like a big giant reminder of being single. Either way, regardless of your circumstance or perception, we want you to consider bringing a specific mind-set to this month. If you take on this challenge we promise you will begin to feel the start of the greatest love affair of all. No need to see the new 50 Shades of Gray movie for this one.

We are certain most of you had heard of the importance of practicing self love. How many of you have set intentions to do so? And, more importantly, how many have followed intention with action? Self love is big in self help books, 12 step communities, therapy, and many other forms of spiritual or emotional transformation. We think the phrase may scare off a lot of people, because it's corny, misunderstood, and in our opinion one of the hardest things to do for most humans.

Self love is hard because we are trained and conditioned to look outside ourselves for validation. It's everywhere, its on billboards, commercials, and in messages we receive all day long. It's in our pursuit of most things. We have bought this way of living; hook, line and sinker. Once we complete, get, reach, surpass, obtain, fulfill, we will finally be okay. But than okay comes and we are not okay. That's because nothing outside ourselves is ever going to be enough. As they say, 1 is too many and a 1000 is never enough! The thousands of things we can acquire will never complete us. That's the trick we have been sold. There is nothing we need to do to feel complete. WE ARE ALREADY COMPLETE.

What we need to start with is reprogramming our conditioning. A Reboot. If you are not familiar with "The Four Agreements" by Don Miguel Ruiz. We suggest you read this book to understand the depth of how conditioned we are from birth, that sets us up for our belief system. But this article is about challenging you to set new practices for the month, that will help start the reboot process. It's simple but not easy to follow. We challenge you to take these following steps as best you can, to begin to experience the greatest love of ALL.

**Step 1:** Wake up in the morning, before getting out of bed, set your timer for 2 minutes. Close your eyes and repeat: I LOVE YOU! Speak it out loud or silently. Your choice. What is important is that for the entire 2 minutes you repeat this mantra consistently with intent toward self. Do this and watch the magic over the month of what can happen. Be open to whatever emotion may arise.

**Step 2:** Write yourself a letter, professing your love to self as if you fell madly in love with someone. Do this during the first week of February so on the last day of the month, you open it and read it to yourself. For the greatest effect on you, dig deep into your past when you fell in love with someone, and wrote your most passionate words. Bring that same energy to writing yourself this letter, don't worry too much if you don't fully believe it or not, or whether you feel any strong emotion in writing it to self. The magic is in reading it at the end of the month, and re-experiencing the letter after putting the challenge into practice during the month. For extra UMPH. Put it in the mail a few days before the end of the month.

**Step 3:** One of the most powerful, reconditioning acts we can do as humans is practicing gratitude. All of the great religious and spiritual practices over the centuries have used this magical tool. Studies show its impact of rewiring the brain, and transforming any attitude. So naturally it will be one the steps to this month. However, with a twist. Write a gratitude list of 5 to 10 things every day only on self.

**Step 4:** This may or may not be hard for you. We know that at different times in our lives we had a hard time looking at ourselves in the mirror. However, this can be one powerful tool this month. At any point in your day, look in the mirror, in your own eyes, once a day and repeat: I'm perfect, whole and complete. I love you!! You can do this in the car mirror, in the bathroom at work or even to your phone camera. Your choice. If you do it before you leave in the morning. Extra bonus.

**Step 5:** Lastly, take yourself on at least one date, go to your favorite food spot and enjoy yourself just for being alive, and appreciating your life. This could be the beginning of being okay with being YOU! Try it.

We hope you embark on this journey with us this month, and put self love as your priority and watch the magic of love pour over you in buckets. Happy Valentines to SELF!!

Love only, Rudy and Kelly Castro



Rudy is a therapist, and Kelly is a Certified Relationship Coach. They facilitate groups at exceptional treatment centers such as, Inneractions IOP, The Villa Treatment Center, and PAX House. Together they have created partnership, family, and a business designed for service. Whether you are an individual looking to create partnership in your life, or a couple looking to develop deeper levels of intimacy, they are here to help guide you. Conscious Partnership, [www.consciouspartnership-coaching.com](http://www.consciouspartnership-coaching.com).



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**Richard Painter, Esq.**  
Former Associate Counsel to President George Bush and Chief Ethics Lawyer, White House Counsel's Office



**Karla Ng**  
Supervising Attorney at the National Housing Law Project



**Jesus Hernandez, Ph.D.**  
Lecturer-Researcher at the University of California, Davis



**Renee Williams**  
Staff Attorney at the National Housing Law Project



**Michael P. Seng, Esq.**  
Professor of Law at The John Marshall Law School

### Featured Discussions

- Gerrymandering, Voter Suppression and Housing Segregation - Any Connection?
- Immigration Reform Meets Housing Civil Rights
- Creating Models/Approaches to Strengthen Housing Civil Rights for LGBT, "Working Poor", Undocumented/Other Economically Marginalized Housing Consumers
- Combating Hate Crimes and Sexual Harassment in Housing
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# THERAPIST

**SPECIALTIES:** Addiction, Trauma and Self Esteem



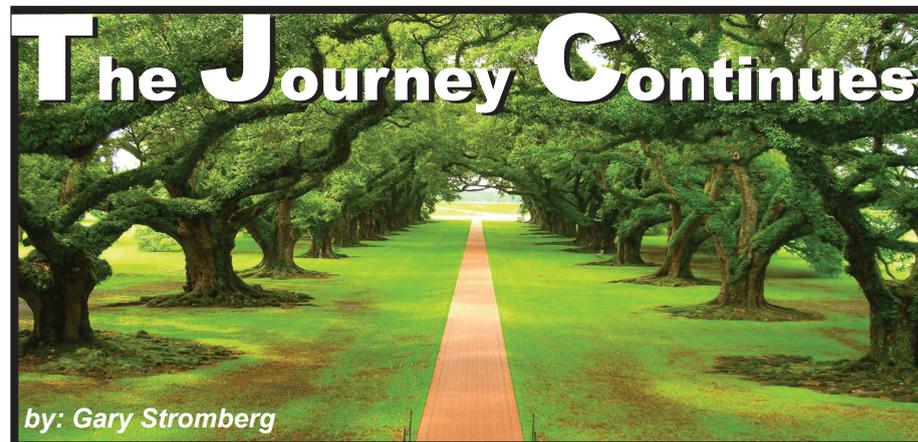
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by: Gary Stromberg

## NOT THAT GUY ANYMORE

Thirty-six years ago I stood at the precipice with a decision to make. With a career of impressive accomplishments in the rear view mirror, I had a bleak future of despair and/or death ahead of me. Alcoholism and drug addiction had rendered me in a state of what the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous refers to as, pitiful and incomprehensible demoralization. The choice seemed simple... Choose life or death?

As the legendary Jack Benny once declared in a similar situation, "Give me a minute...I'm thinking!"

Do I acknowledge I have a problem, or do I continue to live in denial?

Do I listen to my friends and family, or do I seek my own counsel?

Do I continue to deteriorate mentally and physically, or do I say, "I've had enough?"

Throwing in the towel and surrendering should have been an obvious choice, given the state I was in, but at the time it seemed impossible, unimaginable, incomprehensible, and darn right insane.

Insane was the right word, all-right, but it shouldn't have been used by me, but used instead to describe me.

Alcohol and drugs are subtle foes; cunning, baffling and powerful. I seemed to be the last one to know I was in big trouble. When my high-profile career started to fall apart, it was the fault of others. When my substantial income dried up, my business manager was to blame. When the beautiful house I so dearly loved was finally foreclosed, the bank was screwing me. When she finally couldn't take it anymore and left, I knew she would do this to me. When my friends began to disappear, they were scum and didn't deserve my friendship. And when at last, my poisons turned on me, I knew it was over.

Do I choose to live, or do I want to die?

If I once had a dream, it was long ago shattered,

If I once had a dream, it's floating face down in a bottle of Jack Daniels

If I once had a dream, awww, forget it, I ain't no Martin Luther King.

Shortly thereafter, a journey of unimaginable proportions began. Not to any outward destination. No rehab, no trip to a far off spa, I didn't move to another city, as if a geographic change would fix it. No, I didn't have to travel anywhere, except into the looking glass, the mirror, the peeling of the onion of my soul. The journey was within, to at long-last discover where the real problem resided.

It was, of course, in me. What a surprise! With the loving help and support of Alcoholics Anonymous I found the real culprit. We in recovery refer to alcoholism as a spiritual sickness. And if you look that up in the dictionary, I'm sure you'll find a photo of me. "Mr. Spiritual Sickness of 1982."

If you ask me, I might show you a picture of that lost soul that I still carry around in my wallet. Yes, I had the wild long hair and beard, the smug look of false confidence on my face and even the obligatory turquoise jewelry of that era. But look more closely and you'll see into my eyes. Shallow pools of emptiness, pupils pinned from daily consumption of narcotics. As my first AA sponsor remarked when he saw the photo, "the lights are on, but nobody's home."

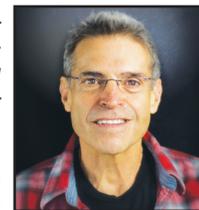
After you shake your head in disbelief, and look up at me again wondering how this was possible, and how have I become such a different person, I can offer you an explanation. I'm a recovering drug addict and alcoholic who was spared from a life of misery, incarceration, death, or even worse...to go on living the way I had been for so, so many years. I've been spared from the life of self-centeredness that led me to care little about others and only about myself. I've been spared from countless fears of inadequacy, failure, success, intimacy and anything else that threatened my well-guarded defenses. I've been spared a life of darkness and shown a path into the light.

I was led to a solution for my problems that has given me thirty-five years of a mostly joyous and free existence. I've been able to turn my greatest liability into my biggest asset. By sharing my experience, strength and hope with others through my writing and service in my 12-step program, I have been granted a life beyond what I could have possibly hoped for.

I'll take that photo back from you now, and put it back in my wallet. I'm not that guy any more.

Gary Stromberg co-founded GIBSON & STROMBERG, a music PR firm of the 60's & 70's. They represented such luminaries as The Rolling Stones, Pink Floyd, Muhammad Ali, Barbra Streisand, Boyz II Men, Neil Diamond, Ray Charles, The Doors, Earth, Wind & Fire, Elton John, Three Dog Night, and Crosby, Stills, & Nash. Gary also wrote and co-produced the motion pictures Car Wash, and The Fish that Saved Pittsburgh. He's written 3 books, *The Harder They Fall* and *Feeding the Fame* (Hazelden) and a third *Second Chances* (McGraw-Hill Publishing) published in 2011. He's working on his 4th book, *She's Come Undone* for HCI Publishing, which will come out next spring.

He's been clean and sober, and active in 12-step recovery for over 35 years, traveling the country speaking on behalf of his books and recovery. Gary is also a leukemia and bone marrow transplant survivor. Gary Stromberg, *The BLACKBIRD Group*, (203) 984-4836, [www.garystromberg.net](http://www.garystromberg.net)



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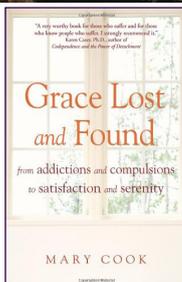
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## RECOVERY, MENTAL HEALTH & FEAR

Since I live being dually diagnosed, I told myself at midnight New Years' Eve, I was going to write, share, and be more open and transparent about my mental health issues this year. So, when I came upon an article I read, I knew I had to share some areas of it. Many of us who maintain recovery from gambling addiction, and are dually diagnosed with mental health, face additional challenges.

I want to let others know what we go through. I also want to help those who don't understand what it is like to battle agoraphobia along with depression, and a few other disorders I have been working through. Many seem to cling to "The Stigma" around mental health, and a gambling addiction.

Now, yes, I do understand that those who have not been touched by mental or emotional problems, or disorders, know or have family or friends who do, not all people want to know more about these topics. However, there's some who don't think mental health problems, like Tom Cruise, even exist. I'm here to say they do exist. About 42.5 million American adults (or 18.2% of the total adult population in the United States) suffer from some type of mental illness, enduring conditions such as depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, and many other disorders.

That is 1 in every 5 people who suffer in the United States alone. So, sorry Tom Cruise and Scientology, you are wrong. Now, thanks to Christina Star's article in Psych Central Blog, she sheds some facts and information as to how fear can make many feel trapped, and feel like someone we are NOT.

One area that has me trapped is agoraphobia. My therapist and I, have been able to link back to my past, and my gambling addiction, as to why I suffer from agoraphobia, a "Fear Based" disorder. She mentioned; "when we believe the world to be a dangerous place, this creates a pervading sense of powerlessness that undermines your personal power, and inner strength in many different ways". Some examples are:

Fear manipulates you into forgetting how strong and competent you really are.

Fear negates your resilience. Feelings of helplessness trick you into believing that you do not have what it takes to tolerate hardship, and bounce back from adversity.

Fear narrows your focus to mainly notice problems, damage, hurt or harm.

Fear impairs realistic thinking, so the scale and likelihood of potential danger are often overestimated. Unless you live in a war zone, a dangerous neighborhood, an abusive relationship, or have just experienced a significant natural disaster, most commonly assumed dangers are less prevalent, or disastrous than imagined.

Fear creates avoidance, non-purposely, and is one of the responses to fear. Self-imposed restrictions on where you go, or what you do limit your options and shrink your world.

Fear can sabotage creative self-expression. Instead of aiming for your aspirations and dreams, you may censor yourself and remain within the safety of your comfort zone.

Fear prevents you from living in the here and now. Worrying what might happen, and anticipating dangers and calamities in the future, removes your attention from the present, the only place where you can function to the best of your ability. Dwelling on past events instead of focusing on the present, also clouds your perception of the realities and opportunities of the now.

Fear cuts you off from the flow of life, and universal benevolence you could tap into.

Fear is the result of a physical mechanism involving the adrenals, and various other body systems. In cases of real and acute danger, this is useful as it alerts you to the need for action.

However, the same kind of responses can also be triggered by imagined danger. With the lines between real and imagined danger often blurred in modern life, fear in all its forms can become chronic. Like with 'Agoraphobia', or other panic type disorders.

Tricking you into believing that you are weak and without inner resources, or that a catastrophe is imminent, fear and its allies are some of the most damaging emotions to allow into your life. You have a choice what you do with your fear: stay in its thrall, or make the decision not to be pulled into it, and question it's association, and how it might be an automatic thought.

Now, this hit me and made sense about how fear can drive us from living outside in the world around us. "Fear can sabotage creative self-expression. Instead of aiming for your aspirations and dreams, you may censor yourself and remain within the safety of your comfort zone."

That is me! I feel safe in my places within my "Comfort Zone." It truly is debilitating, and then I get depressed, as it feels like looking out a window, as life is passing by without me in it.

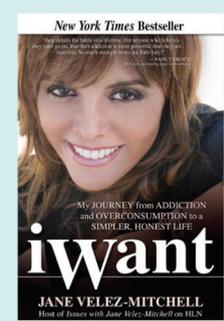
So, what role does fear play in your life? What have you found useful in overcoming fears? If you are struggling, what is your difficulty? Please share your feelings and comments with me by Email. Maybe together we can help one another move forward in recovery without FEAR and "Quit To Win!"

Reference [www.psychcentral.com/blog/author/christiana-star/](http://www.psychcentral.com/blog/author/christiana-star/): Author, Catherine Townsend-Lyon is the best selling author of her book "Addicted To Dimes" and New, "Ten The Hard Way." She is a former columnist for InRecovery Magazine, freelance writer, recovery blogger; and author literary consultant. She is currently co-writing a Memoir with former NFL Pro and Olympian, Vance Johnson due to release mid-2018 and soon former NFL Pro, Randy Grimes. She resides in Phoenix, Arizona. You can contact her at [LyonMedia@aol.com](mailto:LyonMedia@aol.com)



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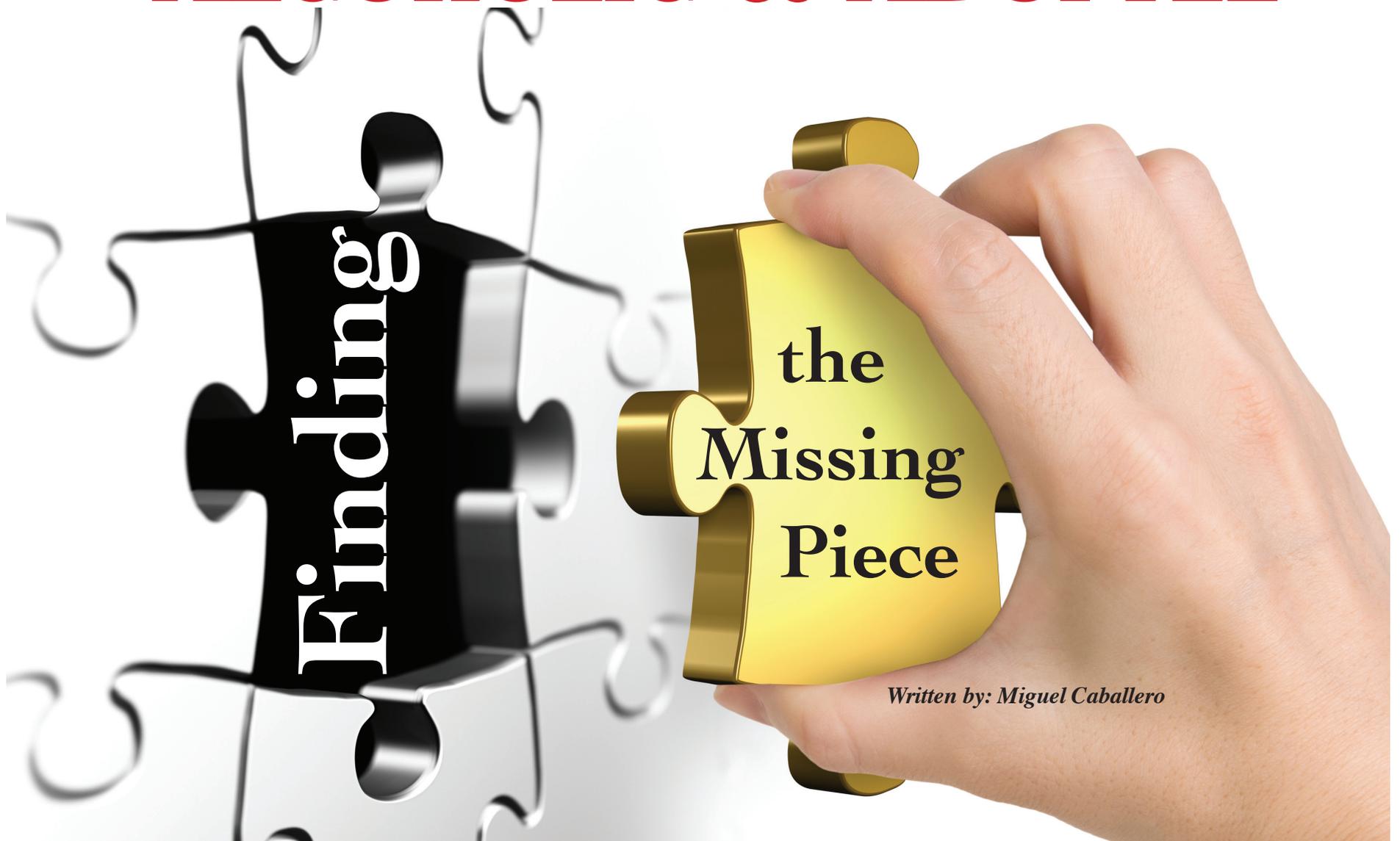
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# ALCOHOLIC & ADOPTEE



*Written by: Miguel Caballero*

Here is something I have believed about myself and my adoption since I was a child, since before I knew I was an alcoholic: My birth mother took one look at me and knew that I was worthless and unlovable, and unredeemable. She didn't want to keep me because she knew something was wrong with me.

For me, as an alcoholic and an adoptee, the feelings of loss, uncertainty and identity that come from being given away by my birth mother can be as cunning, baffling and powerful as alcohol. And as I've been trudging our road of happy destiny, I've met a lot of other adoptees with similarly persistent feelings.

It's why I started AAA. It's a new group focused on AA & Adoption. It's at the intersection of 2 triangles - the AA triangle - unity, service, recovery - and the adoption triad - birth parents, adoptive parents and adoptees.

For adoptees in recovery, our root causes and conditions stem literally from our origin, from our birth and the circumstances around it. There's often an unexplainable feeling of loss that haunts us, and a fear of abandonment that persists throughout our lives.

From some estimates, adoptees are 5 times more likely to become alcoholics than the average person, 10 times more likely to be in therapy, and 10 times more likely to be in prison.

Suffice it to say, we have problems.

It's said in the rooms that there's a God-shaped hole that we as alcoholics try and fill with booze - and drugs, sex, shopping, eating, gambling, etc. For me, as an adoptee that hole has always been shaped by that initial separation from my birth mother. You could say that the God-shaped hole inside me was also a mom-shaped hole.

Adopted or not - many alcoholics say we feel like we never fit in. For adoptees, we often felt like that from the beginning, from the families that raised us. We looked different, height, weight, hair color, skin tone, and often grew up alongside biological children of our parents. We feel like we had to be grateful for this new home we were given, and that at any moment we might be relinquished back if we didn't behave.

Yes, adoption gave me a home with two loving parents who did their best. They did enough wrong that I need therapy, but not enough for a best-selling memoir. And today as a sober man I will tell you they're my mom and my dad, and I love them very much for who they are and how they raised me. But adoptive parents, no matter how great, can't heal that initial break from our birth mothers. I've probably read as much adoption literature as I have recovery literature. I strongly identify with both. There's a book called *The Primal Wound* about that break in which I recognize more of myself than in the *Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous*.

*The Primal Wound, AA, Trauma and Adoption*: I don't think the 12 steps are particularly great at treating trauma on their own. They absolutely give you the chance to stop all of the addictive behavior you've piled on top of the trauma, and to establish a connection with a higher power. I don't think there's any hope of getting better without getting sober. It gives you a chance to heal. But then there's still more work to be done.

And being separated at birth from your mother is certainly a trauma. For many adoptees, we were then shuttled off to an orphanage, while waiting weeks and months for our adoptive families to get us.

While there, we weren't held as often as is necessary for the health of an infant. There's even been studies that show a baby will die if it is not touched or held. (Which is an insane study if you stop to think about it.)

So how do I heal that hole in my heart? How do I start feeling lovable and worthwhile?

For me it started as I was detoxing from alcohol at a psych ward. I don't know why I did it but, I tried to connect with each individual in that facility as a human being experiencing pain, and to show them compassion and care. Like Bill W. relating to Dr. Bob, one sufferer relating to another. I saw each fellow patient as a real human, as someone worth loving, as someone who had something good in them. I wasn't going to throw them away or relinquish them, even if they'd ended up in this psych ward.

It's what I desperately wanted for myself, but never did or could never take in. It's when the healing for me began. As I entered the rooms and began sharing my story, I found that whenever I spoke at a meeting, invariably there would be at least one adoptee that would come up to speak with me afterwards. And as I began collecting their numbers and seeing them around campus, it became clear that we could really help each other.

I've found healing through compassion and projection, and from telling my story as an adoptee and an alcoholic. When my friend Darrylynn, an adoptive mom of an alcoholic, heard me speak, she understood that not everything her daughter was suffering through was her fault as a mom. And when I've heard from AA birth mothers who gave away a child, I got to hear about how they never forgot a birthday, never went a day without thinking of that son or daughter, and how much love and heartache they felt for that relinquished child.



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**CHRISTINE A. PADESKY  
PhD**

Out of that, and some sober experience working through some of my issues, we started AA&A at the beginning of this year. We meet on the first Sunday of every month (on the weekend, so anyone in LA can get to the meeting without fighting traffic.)

As I've been going to different groups and announcing the AA&A meeting, on more than one occasion, an adoptee would come up to me after the meeting and say, "I'll take your flyer, but I'm not coming to your meeting."

Which I get. We adoptees don't like joining things – because we fear that group will eventually reject and abandon us. It's also a very emotionally fraught subject to deal with – like opening up a page of your 5th step that you'll deal with, but never truly eliminate.

So it's a big deal to go to a meeting like ours.

The spiritual, maternal hole: Adoption didn't give me the physical allergy to alcohol. (Though indirectly, it did through biology– my birth dad is likely on the streets and an addict, if he's still alive.) And I probably would have been an alcoholic even if my birth mom had raised me.

But it definitely helped with that mental defect. Emotionally, I tried to fill that mom-shaped hole inside of me with whatever I could. The grief of never knowing her felt like it would never end, and was a raw open wound that would never heal. For example, any time I watched a movie where a mother would protect her son from danger, I'd end up sobbing – why didn't my mother have the courage to raise me, to protect me from the dangers of the world with her love?

And feeling worthless and unlovable, believing that anyone who would see the real me would see that defecation and then bounce, that contributed to a giant case of the f\*\*\*-its.

To me, one of the greatest things about AA is that, it's a program that's based on the concept of one sufferer relating to another fellow sufferer. Bill and Dr. Bob shared their common problems related to alcohol in that way. There's a common bond in that, and it's my belief that there's a spiritual connectedness that happens when we share our vulnerabilities, our strengths and our weaknesses, and our shame that allows for something divine to move in us.

With AA&A, we can do that on 2 levels. As alcoholics, and as adoptees.

The AA&A Meeting: When we have our meetings, we do a short 'moment to remember why we're there', and then we dive right into sharing. In some ways, it's more like a support group than a typical AA meeting. Questions are welcome, and we definitely cross-talk in the sense of acknowledging when we relate to how someone feels, or clarifying some family history. We have so many similarities – struggles forming and keeping relationships, feelings of not belonging that have stayed with us into our adulthood. Oh, and the abandonment issues. All the abandonment issues.

Some of us have met our birth families. It rarely meets the fantasy we had of that family as kids, and it doesn't make everything suddenly better. Sometimes it's complicated, and sometimes it's worse than that.

We've had families of our own, and had the chance to see another living relative for the first time. We have our regular alcoholic problems of wanting to drink, or numb out or isolate, too.

As Dave R. said, "I have about 100 issues around adoption, and I've dealt with about 40 of them."

But every month, we leave feeling better, and feeling understood.

We've found a place where we are a part of, not apart from. For someone who was taken away from the first family they were supposed to know, that's immensely powerful to feel a sense of belonging.

The Future of AA&A: "No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others."

I want our meeting to be there when someone comes into Alcoholics Anonymous, when that primal wound from adoption is no longer being numbed from alcohol and drugs, but bleeding and aching, and raw and horrible. I want to be there for them. Because life does get better. The feelings around adoption can be cunning, baffling and powerful. They may never fully go away, but I want to show that you can be sober, full of life, and still have that peculiar pain and struggle that we adoptees face. But you can manage them and find peace.

It's my hope that we can grow our meeting and that word gets out enough that when a newcomer says that they are dealing with feelings around their adoption, that people in the rooms of AA will send them our way.

If that sounds like you or someone you know, please have them contact us. We'd be thrilled to carry the message to another alcoholic adoptee.

*Written by Miguel Caballero.  
Always in service (310) 625-1088,  
Email: migtastic@gmail.com, or  
www.facebook.com/AAandAdoption!*



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### Sam Quinones

*Journalist and Author of Dreamland: The  
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by: Jenni Schaefer

## WHY WE MUST RENEW OUR VOWS TO RECOVERY

I spoke with Amy on the phone recently. She laughed. She had hope. She planned to share her recovery story with people like you. I was going to help her.

But I can't help her now.

I guess I couldn't completely help her then. I tried as best as I could. I mailed cards and signed books. I sent encouraging text messages. We shared many long phone conversations.

Amy died anyway. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder took her life at forty-years-old.

The loss of my friend is the harshest reminder of why we do what we do. PTSD is insidious.

In the mental health field, we have a lot more work to do to ensure that no more lives are lost. We need more research, improved outreach, and better access to care. We need more people like you — smart, dedicated, and passionate — to join the fight.

If you are reading this, my guess is that you are, in fact, a recovery warrior. Maybe you are a clinician, an advocate, or a family member of someone who suffers with PTSD or another life-threatening mental illness. Or, possibly, like me, you know what it is like to struggle yourself.

In the busy-ness of our everyday lives, all of us can easily forget the importance of our mission. We do what we do — spread the word about hope and recovery— because families can be shattered and lives can be lost. But, more importantly, we do what we do because recovery can bring families together — stronger than ever before. And, with continued access to treatment, healing is absolutely possible.

Hope can be hard to hold onto when, in the course of our efforts, we face inevitable challenges like insurance coverage cutting out early — for many folks, this may even happen repeatedly. When fighting against life-threatening mental illnesses, this extra effort can be exhausting. We can feel hopeless and want to give up altogether.

I know this challenge firsthand; in my struggle to recover from both an eating disorder and PTSD, I spent an unreal amount of time fighting insurance companies; I filled out long forms proving that I needed help only to have to re-send these documents again and again — often to be denied.

Eventually, I was able to get the care that I so desperately needed, and achieve my recovery goals. I was able to do that thanks to amazing support from professionals, family, and friends.

If you are a champion for your own recovery or someone else's (or possibly for a lot of someone else's), cling tightly to moments of freedom from the illness, no matter how small the achievements may seem. The healing journey is long and arduous, no doubt, but we must have hope and keep moving along, because people can and do heal. Trauma may never go away, but PTSD, with help, fades.

As we continue into 2018, consider how you might strengthen and revitalize your fight. Think about the things that you value. How can you spend more time and energy focused on those things?

**For example, you could:** Commit to better self-care • Vow to have more fun • Spend more time with friends and family • Take time each day to reflect on why you do what you do for yourself and others.

Personally, this year, I am devoted to all the above. Authors often write about what we most need to learn! I am also committed to spending more time on my newest passion, writing a book about fighting through PTSD.

It breaks my heart that Amy never got to share her story with you, but I am sharing this now because I know that her message was one of complete hope.

Amy desperately wanted you to know that, together, we are stronger, much stronger, than mental illness. Amy wanted recovery so badly, and she believed in it. She never gave up. Her favorite quote was:

**"Fall down seven times. Stand up eight." – Japanese proverb**

Maybe you feel like the world just knocked you down. I get that. Amy gets that. What is one small step you can take right now in order to stand back up again?

Thanks, Amy, for leaving so much hope behind. We need it; we will use it.

I love you, sweet friend.

*Jenni Schaefer is a singer/songwriter, speaker, and the bestselling author of Goodbye Ed, Hello Me and Almost Anorexic, a collaboration about subclinical eating disorders with Harvard Medical School. Her first book, Life Without Ed, has been released as a 10th anniversary edition as well as audiobook. She is a National Recovery Advocate for Eating Recovery Center's Family Institute. In partnership with Insight Behavioral Health Centers, Eating Recovery Center provides specialized treatment for eating disorders as well as related disorders, including PTSD. Visit EatingRecovery.com/Jenni and JenniSchaefer.com.*



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## A FATHER'S LEGACY - MORE THAN HIS ADDICTION

I once knew a staggeringly handsome man who had thick jet black hair and a mustache. An extraordinary extrovert, this man had a jovial laugh and a jubilant energy; a kind of energy that spread like fire and radiated to all who surrounded him. He loved his daughter, sports, egg salad, listened to Chicago, loved Three's Company and The Hulk. I used to pretend he was my Hulk, rescuing me. He made everyone around him feel like the most important person in the world. We lived in a home in Milwaukee, WI where he worked as a roofer for Packerland.

This man died of a heroin addiction that lasted his whole life. A life that ended at 59 years old. This man was my father. That's right, Carl Michael Minotte, husband, son, father, brother, family man, and heroin addict.

I share this with you, not because I am in search of pity, on the contrary, it's because I yearn for the moment when those that suffer from, and have fallen victim to the horrific disease of addiction receive the memorial that their souls truly deserve.

Many of us, and particularly those that are lucky enough not to be an addict, are unaware that users are powerless over their addiction. Until recently, this has been a difficult concept for me to grasp, as I saw my father shift from a hilarious, confident, and powerful man to an individual quickly dwindling away as if a cancerous python was slowly constricting around his neck. None of us are ever in competition with that python. For addicts, there is never a choice to be made.

However, we are significantly impacted by the decisions and choices made when we love an addict. For years, I wondered if I could have been a better daughter somehow. Did I miss opportunities to help him with his addiction? Was there anything I could have done to encourage changes in his life?

When I look at the reality, I desperately wanted him to change, but there was nothing I could do to influence these changes.

How could I when he was in and out of jail, and then prison for most of my life. What I didn't realize was that I am a part of the vast majority of humans that can have an alcoholic beverage or two, and not feel the NEED to continue feeding that beast. I've never ingested a substance, or yearned for something more powerful to fill the darkness within me.

My father though woke up every morning, physically ill, his body surging with pain until he would succumb to the desire to resort to numbness. True, unabashed addiction is a level of suffering I cannot fathom.

This morning I saw an image on a social media site. The image depicted a spoon with heroin and a lighter underneath, "cooking" the substance so it could be injected. Now, I am the first to stand up and say that allowing an idiotic and insensitive image on Facebook to affect me, is absurd. I'll admit that it's something I could have truly ignored.

However, such an image begs to ask, are the families of the people that have died from drugs and alcohol not entitled to more memories, and a candlelight vigil, rather than such a graphic reminder of the realities of addiction?

Is this such a shameful way to leave this earth that we, as their families, aren't allowed proper grieving? Can I mourn without having to feel as though someone is going to poke fun at my father's passing?

My father died on October 21st, 2012 after I took him off life support. I was the first in my family to be alerted, as I was his only child and had Power of Health. Yes, this is a very jagged pill that I must swallow every morning.

It has taken me many months to overcome the embarrassment I have felt, and to describe the details of my father's death. I am now willing to share it with many, and to embrace the fact that as his daughter, I still love him and am proud of the man he once was.

When it was time for me to clean out my father's room a few days after he died, I found drug paraphernalia, but I also got to know who he was by his things and books. In my Dad's wallet, there were pictures of me and many of my achievements, as well as my mom, although my parents were divorced.

Even through his struggle and haze, my dad still went out of his way each time we spoke, to tell me that he was proud of me. He bragged, to the point of my embarrassment, and never faltered when it came to expressing his love, even when I had nothing nice to say to him.

He once told me that the only thing he ever did right in this world was playing a part in creating me, that I was his angel, and he clung to that until the day that he left this earth. My only hope is that in his final moments in this life, he knew that he did more than just create me.

In my 37 years, I have been supplied with a lifetime of hilarity, the drive and desire to reach out to others, memories of my father making an absolute fool of himself simply to bring joy to those surrounding him. I see him in myself. Not a "junkie," a "waste" or someone "deserving of death" because, you know, "what do you expect when you do heroin?"

I see him as a husband, son, father, brother, and family man. Compassion over judgment is how I would like everyone to see him. I still love him and am still proud of the man he once was, and the man that will forever be emblazoned in my memory as my dad. He will forever be my father, and I will always love him.

But it not just for my dad, it is for other addicts and their loved ones as well, because each person that has fallen victim to addiction was once someone to somebody else. Because of him, I am doing what I do today. I couldn't help him, but there are others who can recover, whether it's the addict or the family.

That is the legacy of my father, not a spoon and lighter.

*Maria is very passionate about addiction and recovery. As an adult child of two addicted parents, she knows firsthand the harm that drugs and alcohol can do. She is also mindful that addiction runs rampant in her family. After losing her father to his addiction, Maria felt it was time to take things a step further. Seeing how her story was touching others, she decided this was her real passion in life.*

*Maria also started reaching out where she lived, and started being an advocate for addicts. Maria does public speaking in the schools, meetings, wherever she can to educate adults and children about addiction, and what the new trends are options for treatment and recovery.*

*Maria specializes as an Outreach Coordinator, NCRC (Nationally Certified Recovery Coach), and in Intervention. She works with the law enforcement, governors, and city officials. She helped a neighboring city get a law changed. Instead of sentencing addicts to jail, they will be sentenced to treatment. <https://www.blogger.com/null>*



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The Thelma McMillen Center hosts the South Bay Networking meeting every other month, at our Center. The purpose of the group is to both meet and network with other community professionals who have interest in issues related to addiction and mental health, as well as to provide a forum for community leaders to make educational presentations to the community. Co-sponsored by Center for Discovery

**February 27, 2018**

“Mindfulness-Based Relapse Prevention” Elizabeth Fong, LCSW

**April 24, 2018**

“Dancing the Transference: The Power of the Unconscious Across Our Lives!”  
Elisabeth Crimm, PhD

**June 26, 2018**

“Neuroscience of Trauma” Amy Costa, MFT

**August 28, 2018**

“Practicing the Here and Now – Using Meditation to Improve Our Consciousness”  
Herb Kaighan

**October 23, 2018**

“A Soldier’s Heart: Healing Addictions With Veterans” Mark Mitchell, PhD

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(SEE REVERSE SIDE FOR 2018 FRONTIERS IN ADDICTION PRESENTATION SCHEDULE)

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**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10TH, 2018 AALA’S FAMOUSLY FABULOUS SPAGHETTI DINNER:** Doors open at 6:30pm, Dinner at 7pm, Cake Auction 8pm, West Hollywood Auditorium, 647 N. San Vicente Blvd. West Hollywood, California.

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 27TH 2018:** Windsor Club’s Fun & Funk Filled Dance. 9:45pm to 1:30am. Suggested Donation \$7. Music by the Famous DJ Nicole. Located at the Windsor Club, 123 West Windsor Road, Glendale, California 91204.

**FEBRUARY 2018 MOBILE ESCAPE ROOM LA:** Located in Sherman Oaks. An Escape Room designed to drive to your sober parties. It’s an excellent way to have fun with friends in a safe and sober activity. Both Escape Rooms were designed on vehicles making it the only Escape Room that is rentable to come to you. There are 2 games available. One is called The Sleep Study. The other is called MR. Muguffins. Contact John at (818) 231-1558. MobileEscapeRoomLA.com

**CEA-HOW SATURDAY MORNINGS:** New Saturday Morning CEA-HOW Gratitude Meeting, 10am to 11am, 17751 Sherman Way, Reseda, California. West of White Oak, Look for Yellow Optical Sign. Reseda Meeting Hall Suites 3 & 4. Studying the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions. Please bring your 12 & 12 book. For more info call Bryce at (818) 621-2130.

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 23RD- 25TH 2018:** Miracles In The Desert, 5th Annual Round Up, Yuma Arizona. Arizona Western College (AWC) 2020 S. Avenue 8E, Yuma, Arizona, 85365. RV Parking South side of Schoening Conference Center and Dry Camping is available @ AWC campus, 2020 S. Avenue 8E (NO CHARGE) Tent Camping is available at Mittry Lake and Senators Wash. Contact Yuma Area BLM Office for information. 7341 E 30th St, Yuma, AZ 85365 (928) 317-3200. For Information visit: [www.yumaroundup.org/wp/](http://www.yumaroundup.org/wp/)

### UPCOMING

**MARCH 16TH TO 18TH, 2018:** 2018 Sitka, Alaska Round up. For more information email: [sitkaaroundup.com](mailto:sitkaaroundup.com). For transportation and Hotel information visit [www.Sitka.com](http://www.Sitka.com).

**APRIL 27TH TO 29TH, 2018:** Camp Seely “EASY DOES IT WEEKEND”. Crestline, California. [www.easydoesitweekend.org](http://www.easydoesitweekend.org)

**SEPTEMBER 21 - 23 2018:** “AA Ardennes — The Road to Happiness” International AA Convention, Houffalize, Belgium. Over 70 planned open AA meetings, English, French, German and Dutch meetings, AA & Alanon meetings and workshops, Campfire meetings. Fri., Sat. & Sun. guest-speaker meeting (Eng.)

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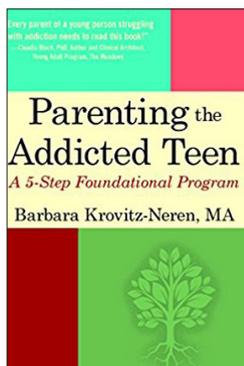
# Book & Video Reviews



**PARENTING the ADDICTED TEEN, A 5-Step Foundational Program:** Written by Barbara Krovitz-Neren, MA. Published by CRP, Central Recovery Press.

Barbara has not only talked the talk, she has walked the walk, and now she has put this 5-step guide into a book to help others. This book not only to help themselves, but also their addicted children. This step by step guide helps you reclaim power over your child's addiction, and to create a healthy family.

This book shows us the importance of not giving up on our children, it teaches the importance of reaching out to them when they are hurting. To recognize the signs they show us, time after time, crying out for our help. Help that only a loving parent can give. As parents we can be quick to give up, feeling that we have failed them and that there is nothing more we can do. So we sent them to professionals that don't know our child. We put them into rehab-treatment centers, hoping that will fix them. That can drive them further away from us. They feel ashamed, worthless, rejected, unloved and that is when they need our limitless love and support, the most. Our kids need us. This book provides a clear ultimatum for all parents, and a way you can show up for them. This 5-step plan is a fresh, new, enlightened perspective for parents that are at their wits' end, or have just given up. This is a parents' book that puts the focus on the parents. I wish this book had been here for me when I was dealing with my addicted teens. If you are a parent struggling with an addicted teen, get and read this book. Then use this book. You will be grateful that you did. Available at [www.Amazon.com](http://www.Amazon.com).

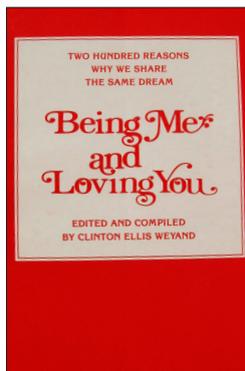


**TWO HUNDRED REASONS WHY WE SHARE THE SAME DREAM: BEING ME AND LOVING YOU.** Compiled by Clinton Ellis Weyand. Published by Being Books Inc.

This is a remarkable book comprised of famous quotes from well-known individuals, such as Longfellow, Newton, Clint Weyand, Victor Hugo, William Wadsworth, William Penn, C.S. Lewis, Max Learner, Sigmund Freud and so many others. This book is filled with a vast array of thoughts, about all of the different facets of love and the numerous applications that it encompasses.

Interest, Amusement, Joy, Hope, Serenity, Gratitude, Pride, Inspiration, and Awe are positive aspects of love. When we apply the principles of love in all of our daily affairs, mature behavior will always be present. We need to truly accept EVERYTHING about ourselves, when this is done you'll realize you're the beginning and the end. Within the very pages of this book, one will find the importance of recognizing how incredible they truly are.

Love is always caring, supporting, uplifting, inspiring, every positive emotion and action stems from love. Love never condemns, belittles, shame, degrade, hurt, because it searches the hearts and minds finding the good in everybody and everything. I enjoyed peering into the minds and thoughts of some of history's great thinkers, knowledge given when received openly, is powerful within its own right. This phenomenal book has taken my perception about love to a higher level, and for that I am truly thankful. Available at [www.Amazon.com](http://www.Amazon.com).



**MY FAIR JUNKIE: A Memoir of Getting Dirty and Staying Clean.** Written by Amy Dresner. Published by Hachette Books.

Amy Dresner writes honestly and openly. She holds nothing back, which I believe is the reason I loved reading this book. I feel as if I know her and her struggles. She tells how it started, the way it started and where the road of addictions (yes plural) led her. Her story is unique in the telling, heart breaking one moment, and laugh out loud funny the next. She writes about more than just what happened, she shares her deepest raw feelings, her funny crazy thoughts, and her experiences with the world around her.

I love the way we get to know the people in her life. Whether it's a roommate or a complete stranger, Amy has the ability to bring you into her world as if you are standing there with her, feeling her pain and eventually her hope. As her father said at one point ... she is "unbreakable".

From Beverly Hills to Hollywood boulevard, from rehabs to sobriety. Amy takes us on a journey, her journey of redemption. At some point I hope that she adds, "writing for Keys to Recovery" to her resume. Seriously I love this book. Available at [www.Amazon.com](http://www.Amazon.com).



Do you have a book you want us to review? Send us a copy to at: 6930 De Celis Pl. #35, Lake Balboa, CA 91406.

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We need volunteers! Please email [angelhanzhamza@juno.com](mailto:angelhanzhamza@juno.com)

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818.358.3663



Angel Hanz for the Homeless saves the lives of animals from ending up in killing shelters.

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➡ **FREE SPAY & NEUTER @ 7 A.M.** ⬅



A snack, clothing, blankets and resources for the homeless will be distributed as well as animal food and supplies.

**RULES FOR PARTICIPATION**

- Be on time
- Animal companions must be present.
- Dogs must be on leashes at ALL times. Cats must be in carriers.
- Animals having surgery **MUST** be in a crate.

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Dr. Armaiti May, our veterinarian

**Mark's Mobile Dog Grooming**  
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\*An appointment **MUST** be made with the Lucy Pet Foundation **PRIOR** to the gathering. Call 855.499.5829

Angel Hanz also provides emergency medical services to animals.

Please donate to our GoFundMe account: <https://www.gofundme.com/EmergencyCareforHomelessAnimals>

# Classified Ads

# Box Ads

## HELP WANTED

**RIDGEVIEW RANCH TREATMENT CENTER IS ACTIVELY HIRING FOR THE FOLLOWING POSITION:** Resident Technicians to provide care and support to our clients. Experience in substance abuse field preferred. Please send resumes and cover letters to jobs@ridgeviewranchca.org.

**WANT A JOB IN RECOVERY? SHARE! IS HIRING.** To apply, please send your resume and a cover letter detailing your passion for self-help support groups, your personal experience attending self-help support groups and why you want to work at SHARE! to: jobs@shareselfhelp.org. See more info at www.shareselfhelp.org. Under Programs/Jobs.

## INCOME TAX PREPARATION

**NEED HELP CLEANING UP THE WRECKAGE OF YOUR PAST, FREEDOM FROM FEAR OF FINANCIAL INSECURITY?:** Individual, LLC, Partnership, and Corporate Tax Returns. IRS, FTB, BOE, EDD All prior years and payment plans. Donald J Anspauch, Jr, IRS Enrolled Agent, www.daddydon.com. (323) 656-7532, email donald@daddydon.com.

## SOBER LIVINGS

**12STEP SOBER LIVING.ORG:** Sunland Area, men's, shared rooms, \$140 week / \$20 day. Phone, Cable, Internet, TV in every room and all the coffee you can drink! www.12stepsoberliving.org. Joel & Lisa Moss (818) 293-2222.

**A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION** Luxury Sober Living Homes, Gender Specific and Pet Friendly. Call (855) 975-4357, www.AStepintheRightDirection.org.

**ANGEL VILLA SOBER LIVING:** Providing Quality Sober Living Homes Since 1997, Private & Semi-Private Rooms, Structured Sober Living, Executive Guest House, Luxury Accommodations with all the amenities, 12 Step Groups, Alumni Program, Family Counseling, 24 Hour On Site Staff, Pet Friendly, Gym Access, Direct connection to local treatment & recovery experts, Transportation Coordination, Encino. (818) 571-8946, www.AngelVillaSoberLiving.com.

**ADVANCED HOUSE SOBER LIVING:** Men's Sober Living, Creating Alumni, Located in Beautiful Venice Beach, California. If you want to start your Journey Today give us a call, (310) 450-7194. www.AdvancedHouseSoberLiving.com

**PRIMARY PURPOSE SOBER LIVING HOMES IN THE SAN FERNANDO VALLEY:** Are conveniently located. Our women's home (Valley Glen) is next to the Orange Line station and Valley College. Our men's home in No. Hollywood is near Cri-Help and the Van Nuys home is close to the Civic Center. Being an active participant in a 12-step program is required. We care about your Recovery! Call Marianne (818) 612-1439 or marianne@primaryp.com.

**MIRACLES IN ACTION SOBER LIVING:** Sober Living at it's finest. We provide food and transportation to 12-step meetings. In Glendale, California. (818) 429-9103, www.MiraclesinAction.com

**THE SOBER LIVING NETWORK:** Supporting, protecting and expanding quality recovery housing since 1995. The BEST sober living homes in Southern California are Network Certified. Find quality homes at www.soberhousing.net or call (800) 799-2084.

**CHANDLER LODGE SOBER LIVING FOR MEN:** non-profit, since 1960. We are not a lock down facility; we function as a recovery program of attraction. WITH: 28 on-site AA Meetings weekly, 12-Step Program Guidance, Relapse Prevention, Sobriety Monitoring & U.A. Testing, Close to Buses, Gym, Cable TV, Food, Internet, Laundry. Call (818) 766-4534, www.ChandlerLodge.org

**PROSPEROUS ROSE SOBER LIVING HOUSE LLC:** Prosperous Rose Sober Living For Men: Structured sober living house. For men in Lakeview Terrace minutes from Hansen Dam. Residence includes laundry facility, gym, wifi, cable t.v. and nice spacious rooms. We offer transportation for grocery shopping and to 12-step meetings. Mellow house with a solid support network. Rent is \$600 per month, pay weekly or monthly. Move in today. Call Suzy for Info (818) 660-8070.

**TRUE INTENTIONS:** Sober Home Located in Tarzana, California, provides a safe environment, free of alcohol & drugs. On site Manager, Heated Outdoor Pool, 12-Step Meetings, Work closely with IOP & Treatment Centers, Pet Friendly, Refuge Recovery Meditation Meetings, Gym Membership, Jacuzzi in some Suites, Private & Semi-Private Rooms. Sobriety is a gift that we wish all will experience. (818) 288-6075 www.TrueIntentionsSoberLiving.com

*You can email, or mail your classified ads to us. No later than the 15th of the month prior to the month of publication. The Cost for classified ads is \$40 for 25 words or less Call us at (818) 386-8400 to confirm receipt of your ad.*



**Jeff Schlund**  
Outreach Manager

Cell 626-372-4550  
Direct 760-423-6728  
Toll Free 855-348-7018  
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Email To: info@keystorecoverynewspaper.com or call us at (818) 386-8400

Mail To: Keys to Recovery Newspaper, 6930 De Celis Pl., #35, Lake Balboa, CA 91406

# KEYS TO RECOVERY — NEWSPAPER, INC. —

## Advertising Rates

## Ad Sizes

	1x	3x	6x	12x
		ea.	ea.	ea.
Full Page	1,700	1,600	1,500	1,400
3/4 Page	1,400	1,350	1,300	1,275
1/2 Page	1,200	1,175	1,150	1,100
1/3 Page	750	725	700	675
1/4 Page	575	550	525	500
1/6 Page	400	375	350	325
1/8 Page	375	350	325	300
1/12 Page	275	250	225	200
Front Cover	\$1,500 (one time only)			
Banner	Each advertiser can only run once a year			
Business Box	\$100 flat rate			
Classified Ads	\$40 for 25 words or less Each additional word \$0.50			
<u>Additional Charges for</u>				
Full or spot Color				
Back Cover, Inside Back Cover & Inside Front Cover (which are premium locations)				

Full Page	10" width x 12" height
3/4 Page	10" width x 9" height
1/2 Page - Vertical	4.85" width x 12" height
1/2 Page - Horiz.	10" width x 6" height
1/3 Page - Vertical	4.85" width x 9" height
1/3 Page - Horiz.	10" width x 4" height
1/4 Page - Vertical	4.85" width x 5.9" height
1/6 Page - Horiz.	4.85" width x 3.9" height
1/8 Page - Horiz.	4.85" width x 2.95" height
1/12 Page - Horiz.	3.25" width x 3" height
Business Box	2.38" width x 2.38" height
Front Cover Banner	10" width x 1.5 height

## Materials & Deadlines

## Terms and Conditions

**Advertising Materials:** The best type of artwork/graphic to send is a PDF (with all artwork and fonts embedded), we can also accept JPEG's, Photoshop files and In-Design files, again make sure that you include all artwork and fonts.

**Advertising Deadlines:** Keys to Recovery Newspaper, Inc. will hit the streets on the first week of each month. Camera ready artwork is due the 15th of the month prior to publication.

All ads are due and payable upon acceptance of ad prior to publication unless otherwise authorized. The publisher assumes no liability if for any reason it becomes necessary to omit an ad. The publisher assumes no liability if for any reason we are unable to print an issue of the newspaper. It is the advertisers responsibility to proof ads, we will do everything we can to help but the publisher assumes no liability for any errors in ad. All advertising is subject to publisher's approval. The publisher reserves the right to reject advertising that we feel is not in keeping with our standards. The publisher does not assume responsibility for the contents of advertisements and all representatives or warrants made in such advertising are those of the advertiser and not the publisher. Publisher is not liable to advertiser for any misprints in advertising.

[www.KeysToRecoveryNewspaper.com](http://www.KeysToRecoveryNewspaper.com)

If you would like to receive Keys to Recovery Newspaper **FREE of charge** at your facility you can go online and fill out the "Distribution" form or e-mail your information to: [info@KeystoRecoveryNewspaper.com](mailto:info@KeystoRecoveryNewspaper.com) or call us at (818) 386-8400.

Our purpose and our mission is to give hope that recovery is possible. Incorporated in the state of California Keys to Recovery Newspaper, Inc. is a non-profit 501(c) (3) non-profit Public Charity.

Our main objective is to carry the message of Hope and Recovery from all types of addictions and disorders to as many people as possible and to offer resources that may provide treatment and support. We do that by printing a traditional type newspaper as well as having an online presence. Our newspaper is filled with columns from today's top experts in the recovery field.

Keys to Recovery Newspaper, Inc. is educating our communities about alcoholism, drug addiction, eating disorders, sex addiction, gambling addiction, homelessness, domestic violence and so much more. We also print, at no charge, a resource guide listing free services and vital help offered within our community.

Keys to Recovery Newspaper, Inc. is making a strong effort to reach the many individuals currently in jails or other types of institutions and offer them information that will assist in their future recovery.

We are NOT affiliated with AA, NA, Al-Anon or any other 12-step program. We do, however, believe in the power of the 12-steps and the principles behind them. We strive to operate Keys to Recovery Newspaper, Inc. using these principles as a guideline - Honesty, Hope, Faith, Courage, Integrity, Willingness, Humility, Brotherly Love, Justice, Perseverance, Spirituality and Service.

For more information visit  
[www.KeysToRecoveryNewspaper.com](http://www.KeysToRecoveryNewspaper.com)

## DISTRIBUTION INFORMATION:

Keys to Recovery Newspaper, Inc. is printed and distributed heavily throughout California and now in 26 other U.S. States. Having a current print run of 20,000+ newspapers and a readership exceeding 100,000 per month, we are already a solid and formidable presence. Although we have digital access to our publication, our primary focus is distributing hard copies. Our newspaper targets readers who are seeking recovery from all types of addictions, disorders and alcoholism and the loved ones who are affected as well as anyone wanting to know more about addiction and recovery. Here are some of the types of facilities we are distributing our recovery newspaper to:

- 12 Step Alano Clubs
- 12 Step Meeting Halls / Central Offices
- Bail Bonds
- Churches
- Clinical Professionals
- Coffee Shops
- Correctional Facilities
- Counseling Office & Services
- Department of Health
- DUI Classes
- Doctors Offices
- Drug & Alcohol Councils
- Employee Assistance Programs
- Homeless Shelters
- Hospitals
- Intensive Outpatient Centers
- Judges & Lawyers
- Libraries
- Medical Centers
- Mental Health Professionals
- Police Departments
- Parole - Probation Departments
- Recovery Stores
- Rehabs and Treatment Centers
- Rescue Missions
- Veterans Hospitals
- Sober Livings
- Transitional Housing
- Therapist Office
- Recovery Conventions & Conferences, Industry Networking Events & many more locations each and every month.

*From the most prestigious neighborhoods and facilities of all types to the impoverished streets of Skid Row, we carry the message of Hope & Recovery to everyone we can. Join us!*

# Vital Services Resource Guide

Keys to Recovery Newspaper, Inc. publishes this monthly "Vital Services Resource Guide" FREE as a community service to assist those in need of help or information. You are welcome to submit listings and volunteer needs.

## RESOURCE GUIDE

**12 Step Recovery Info Line:** Phone meeting info & recordings of recovery (951) 262-3623, Lisa Moss (818) 293-2222.

**Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) World Services:** P.O. Box 459, New York, NY 10163, www.alcoholics-anonymous.org (212) 870-3400.

**A.A. San Fernando Valley Central Office:** (818) 988-3001.

**A.A. LA Central Office:** 4311 Wilshire Blvd., #104, Los Angeles, CA 90010, www.lacoaa.org (323) 936-4343 (800) 923-8722.

**A.A. 8752 S Broadway, Los Angeles, CA 90003, www.aa.org (323) 750-2039.**

**A.A. San Gabriel / Pomona Valley - Central Service Office, www.aasgvco.org (626) 914-1861.**

**A.A. Santa Clarita Central Office: www.aascv.org (661) 250-9922.**

**Al-Anon Family Groups: www.al-anon.alateen.org (888) 425-2666.**

**Al-Anon/Alateen: LA County www.alanonla.org (818) 760-7122.**

**Al-Anon/Alateen Spanish: LA County, (562) 948-2190.**

**A.C.A. (Adult Children of Alcoholics): World Service Organization: www.adultchildren.org (562) 595-7831.**

**Adult Children/Codependents: 12 step & recovery based meetings, Every Thurs & Sun 6pm 8742 Mulberry Dr., Sunland, CA. Lisa Moss (818) 293-2222.**

**Addicts for Christ: Los Angeles www.addictsforchrist.org (310) 452-4328.**

**Anaheim Alano Club: 202 W. Broadway, Anaheim, CA 92805. Meetings 7-days a week (714) 535-0900.**

**California Depart. of Health Care Services: www.dhcs.ca.gov (800) 735-2922.**

**California Hispanic Commission on Alcohol & Drug Abuse: www.chcada.org (916) 443-5473.**

**CEA-HOW: Compulsive Eaters Anonymous – HOW www.ceahow.org. World Service Office (323) 660-4333.**

**CEA-HOW: Compulsive Eaters Anonymous: www.valleyhow.org (818) 503-7484.**

**CEA-HOW: Compulsive Eaters Anonymous; HOW: San Fernando Valley Intergroup, (818) 667-6722 or e-mail: sfovalleyhow@aol.com or Bryce at (818) 621-2130.**

**CEA-HOW: NEVEDA Compulsive Eaters Anonymous: 12-Step Recover. Las Vegas www.ceahow.org (702) 393-6570.**

**Cocaine Anonymous: of the SFV (818) 760-8402.**

**Cocaine Anonymous: World Service Office www.ca.org. (800) 347-8998 or (310) 559-5833.**

**Clutterers Anonymous: (866) 402-6685.**

**Co-Dependents Anonymous: (CoDA) Los Angeles (323) 969-4995.**

**Co-Dependents Anonymous: (CoDA) San Fernando Valley (818) 379-3300.**

**COSA for friends & family of Sex Addicts: www.cosa-recovery.org (866) 899-2672.**

**Crystal Meth-Anonymous: (CMA) (855) 638-4373**

**Debtors Anonymous: www.SoCalDA.org (310) 822-7250.**

**Eating Disorder Support Recovery Groups are free & open to the public. Thurs. at 7 pm. Center for Discovery. 21650 Oxnard St. # 2375 Woodland Hills; 8484 Wilshire Blvd., #510, Beverly Hills; 4281 Katella Ave #131, Los Alamitos; 1000 Quail St., #290, Newport Beach; 11455 El Camino Real, Suite 360, Del Mar. for info. visit www.centerfordiscovery.com**

**Greysheet Anonymous: Recovery 12th Step for all eating disorders. Greysheet.org, (310) 245-6441, cell (310) 445-7709, Linda L. Meeting Saturday, 8:45-10am. Farmer's Market Community Room.**

**Eating Recovery Center: (877) 957-6575, www.EatingRecovery.com/Jenni.**

**ERC Insight: (Mood, Anxiety, Trauma) (877) 737-7391, www.jennischaefer.com/seek-help.**

**Emotional Anonymous: www.emotionsanonymous.org World Services (651) 647-9712.**

**Families Anonymous: www.familiesanonymous.org (800) 736-9805.**

**Family Support Group: FREE of charge. Do you have a loved one suffering with mental health and or substance abuse? Parents and spouses are invited to join our support group, Wed. 6:30pm-7:30pm. At Awakenings, 28720 Roadside Dr., Agoura Hills, #200 CA 91301. For info call (805) 574-0936.**

**Food Addicts Anonymous: www.foodaddictsanonymous.org World Services (772) 878-9657.**

**Food Addicts in Recovery Anonymous: (FA) www.foodaddicts.org (781) 932-6300**

**Gamblers Anonymous: (GA) www.gamblersanonymous.org (626) 960-3500.**

**Problem Gambling: 24-Hour Help Line (Calif.) (800) Gambler or (800) 522-4700.**

**Love Addicts Anonymous: (LAA) www.Loveaddicts.org**

**Laughing Yoga Recovery: for Stress reduction and wellness, breathe, love, laugh and be happy, (760) 832-9992.**

**MADD Mother Against Drunk Drivers: www.madd.org (877) MADD.HELP**

**Marijuana Anonymous: www.marijuana-anonymous.org World Services (800) 766-6779.**

**Marijuana Anonymous: www.marijuana-anonymous.org Los Angeles (310) 494-0189.**

**Marijuana Anonymous: www.marijuana-anonymous.org Van Nuys (818) 759-9194.**

**Narcotics Anonymous (NA): www.todayna.org Regional Office (800) 863-2962.**

**Narcotics Anonymous: www.nasfv.com (818) 997-3822.**

**Nicotine Anonymous National & World Services: www.nicotine-anonymous.org (877) 879-6422.s**

**Nicotine Anonymous So. California Intergroup: www.scina.org (800) 642-0666**

**Nar-Anon Family Groups: www.nar-anon.org/naranon (800) 477-6291 or (310) 534-8188.**

**National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence Headquarters: (All NCADDs provide help & info and other alcohol/drug related services). www.ncadd.org (800) 622-2255.**

**National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence: SFV www.ncadd-sfv.org (818) 997-0414.**

**International Obsessive Compulsive Disorder Foundation: (OCD) www.ocfoundation.org (617) 973-5801.**

**Our House Grief Support Center: WLA & Woodland Hills, CA (888) 417-1444 www.ourhouse-grief.org.**

**Overeaters Anonymous: www.oa.org World Services (505) 891-2664.**

**Overeaters Anonymous: Meeting Hotline 24 Hour (323) 653-7499.**

**Overeaters Anonymous LA Intergroup: www.oalaig.org (323) 653-7652.**

**Pills Anonymous: (PA) www.pillsanonymous.com**

**Rageaholics Anonymous: www.rageaholicsanonymous.org Recovering Couples Anon: www.Recovering-Couples.org (781) 794-1456.**

**RumRadio.org: comprehensive 12 Step sponsorship informational resource website (512) 267-4707.**

**Secular Organization For Sobriety: (323) 666-4295.**

**Sex Addicts Anonymous: (SAA) www.saa-recovery.org (800) 477-8191.**

**Sex & Love Addicts Anonymous (SLAA): www.slaalosangeles.org (323) 957-4881.**

**Sexaholics Anonymous (SA): www.sa.org (866) 424-8777.**

**Sexaholics Anonymous (SA): www.sasocal.org (310) 491-8845.**

**Sexual Compulsive Anonymous: www.sca-recovery.org 1 (800) 977-HEAL.**

**Sexual Recovery Anonymous (SRA): www.sexualrecovery.org (323) 850-8565.**

**S-Anon: (Friends and Families of Sex Addicts) www.sanon.org (800) 210-814.**

**SHARE: www.shareselfhelp.org (310) 846-5270.**

**Survivors of Incest Anonymous: (410) 893-3322. www.slawso.org**

**TEEN LINE: (800)TLC-TEEN (in CA) (310) 855-HOPE, Teens helping teens. www.teenlineonline.org**

**The Other Bar: FREE 12 step based peer recovery network for lawyers & law students (800) 222-0767; www.otherbar.org**

**Workaholics Anonymous: www.workaholics-anonymous.org (510) 273-9253.**

## EMERGENCY HEALTH & MENTAL SERVICES

**AIM HealthCare Foundation, physical & emotional needs of those who work in adult entertainment (818) 981-5681.**

**Armenian Relief Center, Prevention of drug/alcohol abuse (818) 242-2390.**

**Because I Love You, Nationally Known Parent And Teen Support Group. (818) 882-4881 or www.bily.org**

**County of LA Depart. of Mental Health has complete listing of mental health providers at www.dmh.co.la.ca.us/providers/allprov.htm, (800) 854-7771.**

**Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Information (626) 793-7350.**

**HHS The U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services, www.dhhs.gov (877) 696-6775.**

**HOMELESS HEALTHCARE LOS ANGELES: 2330 Beverly Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90057, www.hhcla.org, (213) 744-0724.**

**HOPE OF THE VALLEY (Mission Hills) Recuperative Care Shelter (818) 392-0020.**

**National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) San Fernando Valley Chapter, Free www.nami.org (818) 994-6747.**

**National Runaway Switchboard (800) Runaway.**

**San Fernando Valley Counseling Center, affordable mental health services (818) 341-1111.**

## FOOD AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

**Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services, Info on General Relief, Aid to Families w/Dependent Children (AFDC), Food Stamps, MediCal and other forms for financial assistance, (800) 339-6993.**

## MEALS SERVED & SERVICES OFFERED:

Homeless Shelters listed most have food programs.

**THE MIDNIGHT MISSION** meals 3 times a day (213) 624-9258.

**HOPE OF THE VALLEY (Van Nuys) - Victory Blvd. & Tyrone - Monday Thru Friday 12:15pm. call for more info (818) 392-0020.**

**SAN FERNANDO Valley Rescue Mission: (818)785-4476.**

**ANGEL HANZ FOR THE HOMELESS, INC.** Vegan non-profit: Last Sunday of Each Month 1pm North Hollywood Park, 11455 Magnolia Blvd., North Hollywood, Food Served, Care Packs, Barber, Pet Food, Pet Groomer and a VET for the animals. For Info Call (818) 358-3663.

## FOOD BANKS

**APLA's Necessities of Life Program 7336 Bellaire Ave., N. Hollywood, CA. Thursday 10:30am to 4:pm, (213) 201-1600.**

**As You Are Church, 7855 Lindley Ave., Reseda, CA. Wednesdays & Fridays, call for hours, (818) 758-1700.**

**Catholic Charities/Guadalupe Community Center 21600 Hart St., Canoga Park, CA. Once a month, or on emergency basis. Food recipient must register (818) 340-2050.**

**Children's Hunger Fund 12820 Pierce St., Pacoima, CA (818) 899-5122.**

**Congregational Church of Chatsworth 20440 Lassen, Chatsworth, CA (818) 882-3474.**

**First United Methodist Church 18120 Satcoy St., Reseda, CA - Wed. 11:00am to 1:30pm, (818) 344-7135.**

**INFO LINE of Los Angeles Phone: (800) 660-4026.**

**Los Angeles Food Bank (323) 234-3030.**

**North Hollywood Interfaith Pantry - 4390 Colfax Ave., M & F open from 9:am to 1:pm - (818) 980-1657.**

**Manna, Ministry to the Poor 6642 Reseda Blvd., Reseda, CA. Every Saturday, (except the first Saturday of each month) 11:am to 12:15pm, (818) 776-9696.**

**Our Redeemer Lutheran Church 8520 Winnetka Ave., Winnetka, CA (818) 341-1629.**

**St. Jane Frances Food Pantry 13001 Victory Blvd., North Hollywood, CA (818) 766-7393.**

**St. Bridget of Sweden Catholic Church - Tuesday 11:am to 4:pm 7100 Whitaker Ave., Van Nuys, CA (818) 780-8294 .**

**Salvation Army Glendale Corps: Monday -Friday Food Pantry. 320 West Windsor Rd., Glendale, CA 91204 (818) 246-5586.**

**Shepherd's Nest, Feeding the Homeless 9237 Crebs Ave., Northridge, CA (818) 557-6247.**

**SOVA Food Pantry, Jewish Family Services (open to all in need) 16439 Vanowen St., Van Nuys, CA (818) 988-7682.**

**West Valley Pantry, 7304 Jordan Ave., Canoga Park, (818) 887-6101.**

**West Valley Food Pantry (Prince of Peace Church) 5700 Rudnick Ave., Woodland Hills (818) 346-5554.**

## INFORMATION & REFERRAL SERVICES

**www.SunshineCommunity2015.org** Social Services, (626) 600-9392, Resource Services to Children in Foster Care, Emancipated individuals, Single Women age 18+ with children & much more.

**www.Foundation2recovery.org,** Prevention, Education, Treatment (561) 981-6214.

**24 Hour DayCare, Referrals and Crisis Intervention Services (310) 669-5933 or (310) 427-4022.**

**The Sober Living Network** referral service (800) 799-2084.

**Sober Living Network (310) 396-5270.**

**San Diego Sober Living Homes Assoc: (858) 483-5866.**

**INFO LINE community service referrals, shelter, food, medical, (800) 339-6993 or simply dial 211.**

**AVYFS, Antelope Valley Youth & Family Services (661) 949-1069.**

**Council of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse (CADA) Drop-In Center (805) 962-6195, www.cadasb.org**

**CCBCDC: California Certification Board of Chemical Dependency Counselors www.CaliforniaCertificationBoard.org (562) 927-5143**

**CADCA Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of American (800) 54-CAD-CA.**

**CCPG California Council on Problem Gambling www.calproblemgambling.org (800) 522-4700.**

**CENTER FOR LIVING&LEARNING - employment & supportive services (818) 781-1073 www.center4living.lle.org**





We pray in gratitude, for all that is so freely given to us, and for support and comfort through hardship and pain. We surrender arrogant small-minded willfulness and the fear that creates it, in favor of divine partnership and faith. We listen for the subtle, softer messages from spirit, and the signs that are given to us throughout the day. We know that this guidance honors our free will, and is loving, peaceful, mystical, humorous, and wise. The rich diversity of humanity, nature, animals, and plants is available for our enlightenment. We can appreciate rather than oppress, and demonstrate humility rather than superiority, for what we fail to see and understand will destroy us, and what we see from the wholeness of our spirit will bless us.

We can have self-righteous or rigid thinking, morbid preoccupation, excessive worries, and pessimism. We might have heart disease, sports injuries, joint inflammation, or sexual dysfunction. We could have constricted emotions, anxiety or depressive disorders, excessive anger or fear. Perhaps we feel that we've lost our soul, our faith, and our hope. A holistic practice of purification and replenishment, transforms the energy of the problem into the energy of the solution. Whatever our symptoms, they are potent messages attempting to point us in the direction of healing on all levels, so that we might realize our full potential of health in mind, body, and spirit. We are after all, children of the universe, with a purpose that is far greater than what we consciously realize.

WWW.MARYCOOKMA.COM Mary Cook has a Master's degree in psychology and is a certified addictions treatment counselor in private practice. She has over 41 years of clinical and teaching experience. Mary is available for telephone and office consultations, and speaking engagements. Contact her at 310-517-0825. She is the author of "Grace Lost and Found: From Addictions and Compulsions to Satisfaction and Serenity", available at Amazon.com



2. Practicing OUR WAY OF LIFE to improve and enlarge our personal conscious contact, while helping others to walk this same path to their own conscious contact with Power.

We need both meetings and Steps to survive and flourish.

The spirit of fellowship acknowledges our humanity. Without it, we become disconnected and heartless! With it, we have a forum for freedom.

The Fellowship of the Spirit recognizes our divinity. Without it, we become impotent and soulless! With it, we have a formula for freedom.

Are we human beings trying to have a spiritual experience? Or, are we spiritual beings trying to have a human experience?

YES! Both are true!

Is it time for each of us to pause, take a breath, pray a prayer, and ask for guidance?

Is it time to set aside our slogans, our beliefs, our current understanding of recovery?

Is it time to revisit the original textbook, the "Big Book" Alcoholics Anonymous?

Is it time to examine our personal application, and daily practice of Steps, 10, 11, and 12?

Is it time for each of us to improve, and enlarge our experience of "spiritual awakening"?

Is it time for each of us, and each of our meetings to have a Big Book Twelve Step renaissance?

IF NOT NOW – WHEN?

THANKS for your reading, listening and thoughtful discernment.

My prayer and hope are that you discuss these thoughts with your recovery community, and take appropriate and helpful action!

Herb K. was given the gift of freedom from alcohol February 21, 1984. As a result of the application of the Twelve Steps as contained precisely in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, he experienced a profound spiritual awakening in 1988. Since then he has been very involved in carrying the message of recovery through presentations, facilitating workshops, and leading retreats. He has authored three books to help people access the instructions and confirm the actual process contained in the Big Book for experiencing a spiritual awakening. His books are available on Amazon.com. www.herbk.com, herbk12@hotmail.

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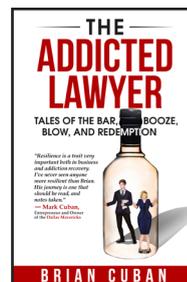
I shut off the engine and take the keys out of the ignition. There's no way to escape my problems. I have to face them. I go back to the front door of the meeting room. Deep breath. Don't look around. Eyes down at the floor. That fixed point. Watch the feet move forward. One baby step at a time. It's the way I'm able to accomplish things in life. It's how I was able to finish eight marathons. Facing any difficult task, my best self is that part of me that can place one foot in front of the other until a goal is accomplished. Don't look left. Don't look right. Don't think about the finish line. Watch your feet, one in front of the other. Again. One in front of the other, back down the long hallway. Now open the glass door. People are looking at you. Don't look at them. Fixed point. Open it.

I do. And I go in.

My blue short-sleeve shirt was soaked with sweat. I sat in the corner and listened. I raised my hand when the call went out for who was in for the first time. Two others were also attending their first meeting. They raised their hands, gave their first names, and said, simply, "I'm an alcoholic." My turn came. "My name is Brian." That's it. I was sobbing. I cried in that corner for a few reasons. I instinctively knew I was beaten. I was ashamed to be there. I was ashamed of what I was. I was ashamed of the decades I couldn't look at my reflection in the mirror. I heard my story over and over again in others' mouths. Not the same facts exactly, but the same pain. The same fears. The same shame. I heard those with long-term recovery talking about their first time through the doors, what they'd learned. I heard hope. For the first time in my life, I was beginning to see what recovery looked like.

Even though I wasn't entirely comfortable yet in that room, I felt I'd found the support of a group who understood. Who didn't judge. Who told me I was not alone and would never be alone in my recovery. The first day of one-day-at-a-time had begun.

Brian Cuban (@bcuban) is The Addicted Lawyer. Brian is the author of the Amazon best-selling book, *The Addicted Lawyer: Tales Of The Bar, Booze, Blow & Redemption* (affiliate link). A graduate of the University of Pittsburgh School of Law, he somehow made it through as an alcoholic then added cocaine to his résumé as a practicing attorney. He went into recovery April 8, 2007. He left the practice of law and now writes and speaks on recovery topics, not only for the legal profession, but on recovery in general. He can be reached at brian@addictedlawyer.com.



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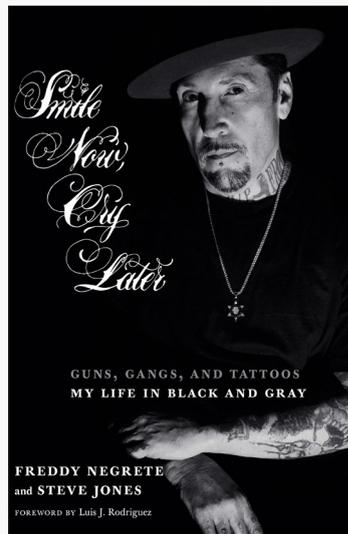
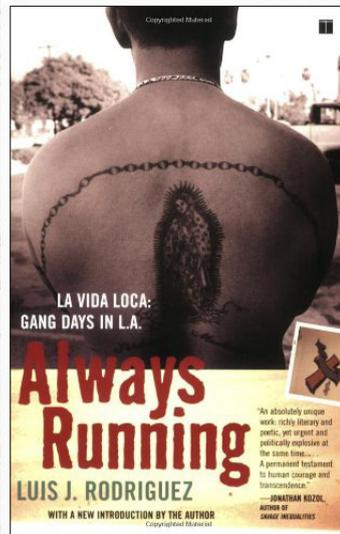


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