



HOPE, FAITH & COURAGE

WRITE LINES



A NEWSLETTER WRITTEN BY C.A. MEMBERS FOR C.A. MEMBERS IN HOSPITALS AND INSTITUTIONS

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Being of service for our fellow man...

I first found the answer to freedom from the grips of addiction by another man practicing the principles of the Twelve Step programme. By this time I had become a slave to addiction and totally controlled by the drugs I was taking. I had been beat into a state where I became open to listen and willing to do what is necessary for victory over drug addiction. I had ended up a very confused, sad, and lonely man who was so lost in addiction. I had become an addict of the type, that no matter how much I tried on my own thinking to get clean and move away from the powerful, cunning, baffling features of addiction my attempts would fail. My will (thinking) was insufficient.

Twenty years of drug abuse had taken me to a place in life I never wish to return, mentally, physically, emotionally broken! My family bless their hearts had let go of me in a last ditch attempt to help me and help themselves. The disease of addiction had spread through their lives and they had to let go of their son and brother for their own sanity. I had

found loneliness again and needed to get to some familiar surroundings so I headed back to London. I went to visit a friend to see if he would be willing to put me up for a few days. I was in treatment with this guy five years earlier.

He seemed different to how I knew him previously and he told me he had been attending Twelve Step meetings in an attempt to get clean. That night he took me to my first meeting and as soon as I walked into the room I felt safe and welcomed. I listened to the main share then others sharing back. I can't remember what or who shared but what I can remember was how I felt at my first Twelve Step meeting. I felt compassion, understanding and love from people who did not know me but they knew why I was there in that room that evening. I went back to more meetings over the next few nights and continued to feel love and care from fellow addicts.

It was in these times that I started to get moments of clarity and look inwards realizing that I needed to

change otherwise my life was going to continue in this downward spiral. I had to change, no one was going to come and save me. My experience was from hopelessness came hope. The desire had to come from within. So I started going back to meetings. Sitting in the rooms gave me a break from the madness, which was so necessary; the meetings were and still are a place of sanctuary for me.

I wouldn't share, I would just listen, until one day I could not live with the pain any longer and I opened my voice and the last few years of my addiction came pouring out. It was a very emotional experience getting in touch with how the illness had manifested in my life and the pain I had caused myself and others... I can remember after the meeting people approached me and taking me for some food, more acts of love which carried the message to me. These people cared about me....

A guy took me outside the restaurant and proceeded to share his story with me. He carried a vision to me that night, and I left thinking

to myself for the first time that there really is a way out of this hell hole! I continued going to meetings over the next week or so while continuing to use and would here "keep coming back, welcome, how are you? Glad you are here." These words would have impact and it was so instrumental in my early attempts at breaking free from the chain of addiction. Knowing that I was not alone and there were people who understood the nature of addiction and wanted the best for me.

A few weeks later after getting to many meetings I was detoxing in a crisis unit. I can remember feeling so grateful to be away from the desperate place I had entered and felt the wonder of hope which was so relieving. I remember the huge weight lifting off me when I walked in the doors. I felt safe again. I ended up staying there for three weeks and while there they suggested I go into treatment if I could get funding. I ended up doing three months on a day programme where I was introduced to the Twelve Step programme of Cocaine Anonymous and a man who was fully armed with the facts about himself.

He carried to me on that day a story very similar to mine and I knew this man had an answer to my problem his story carried weight and depth. He asked me if I was willing to go to any lengths to recover. I was willing to do anything! He started to get me to read the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous from the very first page where it states that this book tells the story of thousands who have recovered from alcoholism (drug addiction). He suggested I swap the word alcohol for drugs if this helped me identify with the nature of addiction. I read the preface and

forewords and was filled with hope. I then continued to read the book, I remember reading the Dr's opinion, and it simply blew my mind!! I believed in this great mans opinion regarding the allergy theory... the phenomenon of craving and that this is a sickness, it made so much sense. I then continued on reading the next seven chapters and continuing to identify with the illness and finding that the solution is spiritual and that I need to find a God of my understanding and that if I go through the Twelve Steps I will find this power (GOD) within me.

Very early in my recovery it was suggested to pray and I started to pray thanking God for helping me in my life and for keeping me clean today. I was always grateful for being clean and sober.

I surrendered at Step 1, fully conceded that I am an addict and at Step 2 I was willing to believe that a power could restore me to sanity. We then got on our knees and turned our will and our lives over to the care of God as I understood that word, saying out loud the Step 3 prayer...

My Step 4 was completed in two days and I shared it with my sponsor and God. He then directed me to the book and I ended up on the beach reviewing the first five steps and I was entirely ready to have God remove all my defects of character and said the Step 7 prayer on my own on that beach. It was at this moment I knew that the obsession had been removed. I felt totally at peace and ease with everything. I felt connected to all, it was an experience I am so grateful for I then knew that there is a God, and I had come to believe that a power greater could restore me to sanity. I

had a spiritual experience of the profound kind

I then proceeded with the rest of the steps and started to move into the amends I started to experience the Step 9 promises knowing a new freedom and a new happiness. We will not regret the past, nor wish to shut the door on it. We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows etc etc.

I now started to realise that the programme was working in my life and that I had a message to carry and give away. I started to sponsor actively and have continued to over the last five years and what a beautiful experience it has been. Being of service is how I continue to live this life, a clean and sober life filled with hope faith and courage.

I have so much going on in my life today, I have travelled, have some wonderful friends, have my family all back in my life (my father and grandmother passed away last year) they both watched their son and grandson get clean and start to fulfil his dreams and capabilities. I have a great job and have been studying for three years moving in a positive direction continuing to live a day at a time trying when possible to share my experience, strength, and hope.

All this has happened as a result of the Twelve Step programme and some willing members being of service and sharing their experience, strength, and hope.

In Love and Service

Anonymous

COCAINE ANONYMOUS HELPLINE

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WWW.CAUK.ORG.UK

JUST A THOUGHT

I have been shown the difference between my wants and my needs.
Today my needs are met.
For that I thank C.A.

“Finishing the 12 Steps?”

Hi, I am grateful to be of service, it is my pleasure. I'll start from the beginning; I wanted to get clean off crack, weed and alcohol, but how? I tried so many times to stop; but it seemed I had a lot of trouble staying stopped. I was hopeless. I needed a power greater than I was, and at that time I felt that power in the rooms of Cocaine Anonymous.

After a while I started to learn to trust and believe in a higher power, I became dependent on that power to give me the strength to stay clean, and to help me keep my faith. I learned to be honest, open minded and willing, because I did not want to go back to where I had just come from, which was a gateway to death. After I heard people sharing that their obsession to use had been lifted, I became motivated to get into the middle of the fellowship, and most importantly to get a sponsor. That's what I wanted.

My first session with my sponsor was interesting. We identified ourselves as addicts, she had done the same things I had done, and she felt the same way I did, and most importantly she believed the lie in her mind that I had. We went through the *Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous*. We paused at each paragraph, and we each shared our experiences.

Step 1: We admitted we were powerless over cocaine and all other mind altering substances - that our lives had become unmanageable

My understanding of Step 1 began to be placed on a solid foundation, before undergoing the rest of the steps. Finding out that I have a disease, which is 3 fold in nature, *spiritually, mentally* and *physically*, I realised I can not mess around! In the past I continued to believe the lies in my head that I would be able to control my using, little did I know that once I put any drug or alcohol into my system, something happens in my body and mind, which enables me not to stop. I remember when I tried to stop for my son; I had the strongest desire not to pick up again. Eventually I did pick up again, because I was *powerless*.

My sponsor burned in my consciousness that I can get clean and stay clean, regardless of anyone, the only condition is that I trust in God. No human power can keep me clean.

My sponsor continued to guide me, she said take your *body* to meetings, treat your *spirit* by praying and doing service, and *mentally* go through the process of the Twelve Steps outlined in the Big Book. All those three parts needed to be treated all in one.

Step 2: Come to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity

After finding out that I have no power to keep me stopped, being powerless is unacceptable, so I started to *believe* in the process of the Steps and in the Big Book. It was a great beginning for me to simply *believe*, it also seemed I had no choice but to *believe*, there was evidence and proof that people have recovered. They have been restored to sanity.

Step 3: Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, as we understood him.

I turned my will to God, for him to control my life, because I was not doing a good job by myself. There is a Step 3 prayer in the Big Book (Pg 63), a sentence in the Step 3 prayer goes like this, "Relieve me of the bondage of *self*..." The prayer mentions the problem just there, *self*. I used to think crack and alcohol was the problem. **I am the problem.** I let God be my Director.

Step 4: Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves

I followed that with vigorous action. Step 4 is facing the things that have been blocking me away from God. I wrote a resentment inventory, fear inventory, and sex inventory. I looked deeply into my past behaviour, feelings and thoughts; I swallowed a whole load of truth about myself. Things clearly needed to change.

Step 5: Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs

This Step meant trusting my sponsor, I saw her as an understanding and trustworthy person. I could not carry that entire load myself; I had to have outside help if I was to learn the truth about myself - the help of God and another human being. I started on a new footing, my way of thinking started to change, and I began to experience true humility. Without a fearless admission of my defects, I would not have stayed clean.

Step 6: Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

At this Step it was important for me to be fully *ready* to strive to do God's will for me. I tried to do the opposite of my defects and to change for the best.

Step 7: Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

Step 7 went hand in hand with Step 6, because in Step 6 I got ready, while in Step 7 action started. Most importantly, **humility** was essential for survival. When my sponsor and I prayed the Step 7 pray, I cried, I felt very humble within. I left my sponsor's home feeling full of strength, strength from my higher power. (The prayer is on page 76 of the Big Book)

Step 8: Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

I looked backwards to discover where I have been at fault; next I made a vigorous attempt to repair the damage I have done, and having cleaned up the debris from the past I consider how to develop the best possible relations with every human being I know.

Step 9: Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others

I prayed for the willingness to take action, because I was very fearful. The readiness to take the full consequences of my past acts and to take responsibility for the well being of others at the same time was the basis of Step 9. My mom said, "I am very proud of you, keep doing what you are doing, in the past I was always worried of you, now I am not worried that much any more,"

Step 10: continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it

Step 11: Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

And

Step 12: Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to addicts, and to practice these principles in all our affairs

These Steps are ongoing, never ending, because I cannot let go of my Higher Power. It is about maintaining being clean, with the help of my Higher Power. I have started to maintain my emotions, and to continue to check myself, by doing mini inventories at night. As I went through the Steps my conception of God grew and grew; he is infinite, never ending.

I will never finish the Twelve Steps; it is ongoing all the time, one day at a time.

I started to take out time to meditate. I do not want to be blocked from this power; I look forward to meditation and to hang out with my Higher Power. I am able to be of use. I sometimes have bad days, but I now have the tools to go through the storm. Internally I feel at peace. My life as changed so much, thank you.

COCAINE ANONYMOUS
0800 612 0225
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*God, grant me the Serenity to accept the things I cannot change...
Courage to change the things I can and Wisdom to know the difference*

JUST A THOUGHT

I soon discovered that once I stopped using, the real problem presented its self.
It turns out the problem was me.
Through the practice of C.A.'s Twelve Steps I have again and again been able to bring almost
all of life's problems back to their source, me.

Power That Leaks Out

I came to Cocaine Anonymous because years of using had hammered me to my knees and I wanted to die. I knew I could not carry on using and you guys told me I would not have to. I now know that not using is only a tiny part of the gifts this programme has given me.

A few days ago on the anniversary of my sixth drug free year, my baby son was taken in to hospital. He had lost 10% of his body weight and was really very ill. One of the nurses held his little arm as the other was trying to find a vein so they could get some fluids in to him. While this was going on he just looked at me with that *'help me Daddy'* gaze, unable to move.

At that point I realized I was in the middle of yet another spiritual experience. I was able to look my son in the eye and say "don't worry, it will be ok". In slightly less than a week he was ok and is now home and well. My point is this; six years ago I could have done nothing else but run and hide. The fear that dominated my life would not have let me do anything else.

The power I have found in Cocaine Anonymous has truly changed every area of my life. Today that power is with me everywhere I go, it has leaked in to all areas of my life. I came here because I could not stand life any more; I stay here because I love life so much more.

For more information about the fellowship of Cocaine Anonymous please contact;

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or would like to contribute an article please email: hi@cauk.org.uk**

Correspondence

My name is **** and I am an addict. I feel very fortunate today to be able to put some of my hope on paper. I am a text book addict who has battled with his addiction for over fifteen years. To date I have spent most of my life behind bars, and I am currently serving a sentence of ten years.

I do not wish to bore you with all the war stories of my addiction. My guess is that if you are reading this then you probably know where it took me anyway. It took me to a place that I would not wish on my worst enemy. A place so dark and

painful that I could not see even a glimmer of hope at the end of the tunnel. I was a total slave to drugs, and no amount of willpower could stop the endless cycle. What was once a sociable, recreational and enjoyable drug had left me a hopeless and nervous wreck.

Today my life is very different thanks to the Cocaine Anonymous program. I have learnt to live again, free from the grasp of cocaine. I am working out of the prison in society five days a week, and I am also studying for a degree. Above all I have become someone whom I can

respect. I have a new-found freedom because my prison lay deep inside me.

I can only hope that if you are like me in any way, that you go to a Cocaine Anonymous meeting and give it a go. You never really know until you really try something just what may happen.

I wish you every peace that I wish for those I love.

WHO IS A C.A. MEMBER?

While the name "Cocaine Anonymous" may sound drug-specific, we wish to assure you that our program is not. Many of our members did a lot of cocaine; others used only a little, and some never even tried coke. We have members who drank only on occasion, those who casually referred to themselves as drunks, and others who were full-blown alcoholics. Lots of us used a wide variety of mind-altering substances, calling ourselves stoners, tweakers, junkies or just plain dope fiends. Whether we focused on a specific substance or used whatever we could get our hands on, we had one thing in common: eventually we all reached a point where we could not stop.

According to C.A.'s Third Tradition, the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using cocaine and all other mind-altering substances. ***Whatever you may have been using, if it led you to this meeting, you're probably in the right place.*** Over time, virtually every single one of us has realized that our real problem is not cocaine or any specific drug; it is the disease of addiction.

It can be tempting to focus on our differences rather than our similarities, but this can blind us to potential sources of support in our recovery. As we hear other members' stories, the most important question to ask ourselves is not, "Would I have partied with these people?" but rather, "Do these people have a solution that can help me stay sober?" We encourage you to stick around and listen with an open mind.

With its all-inclusive Third Tradition and First Step, Cocaine Anonymous welcomes anyone with a drug or alcohol problem and offers a solution. C.A.'s Twelve Steps are not drug-specific, and Cocaine Anonymous is not a drug-specific Fellowship. It doesn't matter to us if you drank or what type of drugs you used; if you have a desire to stop, you are welcome here!

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"Our personal recovery depends upon C.A. unity"

I dragged two prison holdalls into my first Cocaine Anonymous Meeting, feeling scared; I was lost, believing I was a social loner. Afraid 'they' would not like me and 'they' would judge me because I didn't like me and I judged me, so I initially judged all 'them'. A C.A. sponsor who had been through the 12 Steps of C.A. and visibly lived principles in her life; she helped 'me' become 'we'.

I was taught that if I am alone I am powerless (Step 1) then we need a power greater than ourselves (Step 2). Our whole recovery as individuals depends on the 1st C.A. Tradition's principle of unity, being united as one by the C.A. fellowship working in harmony. Helping newcomers is simply to get out of the bondage of self, 12 stepping promotes recovery of mind and being of service treats my maladjusted spirit. Attending meetings is not enough; Unity is the collective entity of C.A. sharing one common goal.

JUST A FINAL THOUGHT

One day before my fifteenth birthday the first meeting of Cocaine Anonymous took place, they knew I was on my way.
Years later I crawled in to the rooms of C.A. beaten enough to ask for help.

With nowhere else to go I came to you, with nothing else to do I did what you did.
The transformation was, and still is, mind blowing.

Now, a few years down the road, I realise it's not all about me any more - it's about the next person who reaches out to Cocaine Anonymous... the person I don't yet know about.