



HOPE, FAITH & COURAGE

WRITE LINES



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

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In the Midst of a Storm

Life was breathed into me on 29th September 2006 through an encounter with the fellowship of Cocaine Anonymous in a detox unit. I had reached a place of total despair through my drug addiction and was at a point in my life where there seemed to be no hope; just a catalogue of wasted years, pain and loneliness. It was all too clear that I had had an inability to face life and had continued to keep running into brick wall after brick wall...the majority of which had bars for windows!!

From this encounter with Cocaine Anonymous and a feeling of complete desperation I was set on the road to recovery. Very soon my life was completely unrecognisable to what it was. Hope was born and there was this strange thing called peace of mind occurring, family members started to re-enter my life (and to trust me!!) and the loneliness started to disappear. Wow....where had this been all my life?!!

Opportunities and great gifts kept just unfolding, I could no longer deny the fact something was at work in my life much greater than me.

In the summer of 2007 I went along to a 'C.A. Speaker weekend' in Brighton; one of the guys speaking at this event started off by telling how he was in the midst of some serious stuff going on in his life. He began to tell of a family member having had a critical illness which recently resulted in their death, facing bankruptcy, lots of people wanting money and so on. After this the gentleman then proceeded to say some profound words which have always stuck with me....what he said was this; 'God protects us in the storm, not from it.'

One liners, great aren't they?! We all hear them on our various travels and encounters in life, but what I have learnt today is that hearing and experiencing are two entirely different things.

My partner was recently diagnosed with quite a rare form of Leukaemia which is posing pretty difficult to treat. We are praying for this course of treatment to be successful and a follow up bone marrow transplant to take place afterwards. In these uncertain times I have to dig deep to find my inner resources, I can feel that what is happening is an injustice and unfair and to be honest with you, why wouldn't I? What I do know is that I am carried by a faith and surrounded by people who are there for me. I feel love today and that is something that I had always been missing in my previous life.

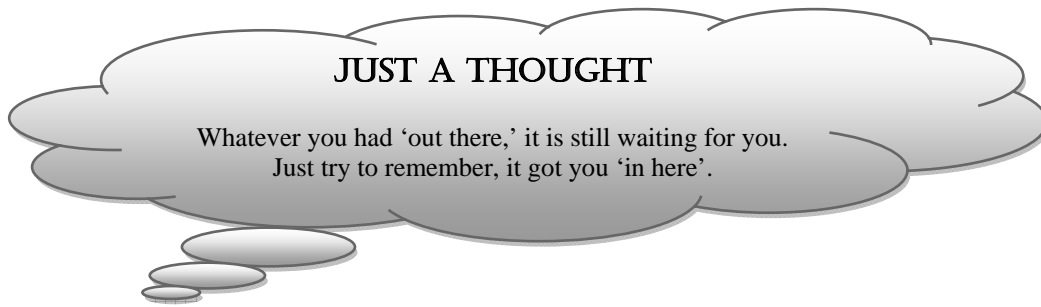
You see, life is life and stuff happens....that's the storm.

What I have been gifted with today is the strength to face fear and adversity and live life without running to the bottom of a syringe, can of lager or a bottle of pills.

For a drug addicted alcoholic that could not cope with losing his giro cheque, I can tell you this is nothing short of a miracle.

That truly is the power of God: protecting me in the storm.

This way of life was given to me freely, for that I am truly indebted to the life breathing fellowship of Cocaine Anonymous. It's an offer to all who want it.



RECOVERING OR RECOVERED

What's this thing about recovering or recovered? I smile to myself when I listen to people in so-called recovery who then go on to say "I'll never recover, I'll always be recovering"

I guess it depends where people take direction and how they define recovery from drug addiction and/or alcoholism.

For me the solution was found in the Twelve Step fellowship of Cocaine Anonymous using the Big Book of A.A.

I listen to people again and again sharing how they work the Steps out of the Big Book but will never

recover. Surely they must be reading a different book. Either that or they haven't really worked the Steps yet.

*We, of Alcoholics Anonymous, are more than one hundred men and women who have recovered from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body. To show other alcoholics *precisely how we have recovered* is the main purpose of this book. (*Alcoholics Anonymous – Forward to the First Edition)

Again and again the Big Book refers to members who have recovered, yet we still have people in the rooms shouting loud and clear, "we never recover, we will always be recovering" I wish in no way to fall

out with anyone, so if that's you, that's you.

If however, you are one of those people who work the Twelve Step programme as laid out in the Big Book, please remember we need you. Without recovered members we have nothing but war stories and sickness to offer the newcomer.

Let's all try and consider the second half of the forward to the first edition statement above once more; **To show other alcoholics precisely how we have recovered is the main purpose of this book.* (*Alcoholics Anonymous – Forward to the First Edition)

*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*



Step Two: Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves Could restore us to sanity Or Now what?

Right here I hit a brick wall. It was that word “could”. That implied probably wouldn’t. “*May do it for everybody else, but probably not for you.*” It would be just my luck, I thought, to be the only man in the Universe that God chose not to restore to sanity. I needn’t have worried. About God, about sanity, about anything. It says in the Big Book that the only essentials to recover from alcoholism are honesty, open-mindedness and willingness, but that these are indispensable.

Well, I was certainly willing. I was willing because I didn’t see that I had a choice. Nothing could keep me from picking up a drink; not willpower, not faith, and certainly not another human being. Neither could fear of the direct consequences keep me from drinking.

On the other hand, I really believed that this time I had had my last drink. If you like, there had been a very black line drawn under it; it was the past. I suppose that is how I look at Step One now, on a daily basis. As a line under my drinking.

So if my drinking was over, it now became all about trying to live sober. And how the hell was I supposed to do that? Because I *can’t* live sober. It’s life without alcohol that drives me to drink.

Perhaps this is where open-mindedness comes in. Some people say that when they first arrive at their rock-bottom, where the steps are to be found, they can’t conceive of any power in the Universe greater or more powerful than them. I didn’t have that problem. I mean, I just had to look around me. The wind was more powerful than me, the rain; the government, the police, the army; electricity, nuclear power and so

on and so forth. But more recently, and more humbling by far, and just to get things into some sort of honest perspective, alcohol itself was a power greater than me. It was my master. It ruled my life. It dictated where I went, what I did, who I saw, how I felt, my thoughts, my emotions, my fears; it demanded that I give it every second of my life; with no tea breaks. I was its slave.

And what was alcohol but a bunch of random chemicals? So if I was honest with myself I could admit that a bunch of random chemicals was a power greater than me; not only that, but a bunch of random chemicals that had robbed me of any personal power that I’d ever had.

I’ve since come to believe that I never did have any power, and accepting this has been the foundation not only of my recovery from alcoholism, but they key to happiness and peace of mind as I journey.

An expectation is a resentment waiting to happen, because we are powerless over people, places and things, and the outcome of everything. That being the case, we can deal with the outcome of anything in two ways: we can be attached to the results, and therefore when the results are not those we would have liked, we become angry or bitter or disappointed or feel cheated, and start the endless internal dialogue: “Things shouldn’t be like this. If only this or that had/hadn’t happened. It should have been different. Maybe if I’d done/said this/that/the other it would have worked out how I intended. If only he/she/it would be less like they always have been and more how I want them to

be. Why does this always happen to me? Doesn’t God know who I think I am?” Consequently we are fighting against what *is*, against reality, against the flow of the Universe, or if you like biblical terminology, the will of God. Every problem we have stems from this.

Alternatively we can just accept it. True spiritual growth starts from this small seed. Reality is what in front of you. *It is as it is*. No amount of stamping your feet, sulking, regurgitating the past or projecting about the future can change it. You can like it, or you can not like it. It makes no difference. *It still is as it is*. So you may as well just accept it and move on.

Regarding my alcoholism I had spent years in non-acceptance of reality, or of demanding some justification as to why I am an alcoholic. My internal argument was something like this: “It’s not fair. How come out of all the people in the world I have to be an alcoholic. How come none of my brothers and sisters are alcoholics? How monstrous is it that I’m the one who can’t touch alcohol, when I’m the only one who knows how to drink? What’s different about my body and mind? Why haven’t they invented a cure yet for God’s sake? I can’t believe that the one thing in life that means everything to me is going to be taken away. I need it!”
And so on.

It says in the Big Book that alcohol itself finally beats us into a state of reasonableness. I came to a place where I finally did accept that I was an alcoholic and therefore could not drink again, ever. I accepted it because there was no room for denial any longer. My life as a drunk had finally come to an end. Which begged the question: Now what?

Step Eleven Prayer

There is a message hidden between the words.
When you find all the words, the hidden message will be revealed.

T H E P F U O W E R T L O C T
A R R Y T O N T H A O T O R U
T T E H S F R D R V S W U I C
M R G P N M Y G E K L T H N M
Y I O U O N E I I R H T I A F
L C P F O H E E E V S R I Y O
T Y V M M S B T F Q E T P P S
I B R T T O S P M C P N A K M
R A E Z D W C K D M U Z E N P
H U Z I X E I A D S A G O S D
K G S Y U X P T U E X Z O S S
K X V I O T R N C L A F B R X
U O N P J J K A O W S E Z Q I
P K U C X T E W P O T L K U G
O T A Z I P L W U D Z Z P L X

COMFORT
FAITH
FORGIVENESS

HARMONY
HOPE
JOY

LIGHT
LOVE
PEACE

TRUTH
UNDERSTAND

Poetry Corner

If you could see inside my head,
And see how I does think,
You'd see how up and down I was, and madness on the brink,
I'd never know who I was, my name, I was just her,
My head a mess, my thoughts aturn, my vision just a blur,
Things have changed relentlessly,
Upon my head a crown
An upturned mouth worn on my face,
Which once could only frown,
I'm learning how to see myself, as others do see me,
I'm liking how I see myself, and me's becoming free,

GRATEFUL

Today I was overwhelmed by emotion.
Mainly gratitude.

Gratitude to God for progress, not perfection.

Gratitude for growth because of sobriety.
Gratitude that last week when my past was shoved in my face that I took it like an adult. I didn't like it, but I could see why the person was acting the way they were. I could see this because I have acted that way. I might act that way again someday too.

Gratitude that I could admit my mistakes and still hold my head up high.
See, last week a conversation didn't really go my way. Some hurtful things

were said to me. I stood up for myself which was major progress with this person. They are usually able to condense me to a pile of rubble in no time. But I didn't get mean & ugly back. I didn't throw at them all the things that have made me angry over the last 4 years. Hell, over the last 40 years. I stood up for myself without having to take them down.

I wasn't always that way. Although I cried, and cried for many reasons, ultimately I could see what was driving the defensiveness and meanness that ensued. I accepted this person's opinion although I did not agree. I trusted that I had done that right thing and was doing

the right thing in the future. I was going about my plans in the right way too. I knew that I had to trust in my Higher Power because we had already talked about my decision. I've been listening. His answer has been consistent so there was nothing more I could do but trust - so I did.

Today fences were mended.
Transgressions forgiven. Futures planned. Bonds healed. Love and acceptance validated. All because of faith and trust. All because of my Higher Power.

And for that I am grateful.

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

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Morning Meditation suggestions: *These prayers come directly from the thoughts in the Big Book.*

"God please direct my thinking today and keeping it divorced from self-pity, dishonest or self-seeking motives. Please help me to employ my mental faculties, that my thought life might be placed on a higher plane of inspiration and help me pay attention to this vital sixth sense."

"God, I offer myself to thee – to build with me and to do with me as thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy way of life. May I do Thy will always."

My Creator, I am now willing that you should have all of me, good and bad. I pray that you now remove from me every single defect of character that stand in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows. Grant the strength as I go out from here to do your bidding."

"God, please show me how to find patience, tolerance, kindness and love in my heart, my mind and my soul. Please help me show these attributes to my family and also, to those about me."

God, please remove from me: selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, and fear. If these feelings crop up, help me to immediately share these feelings with others. Help me quickly make amends to others for my wrongs, that I might live serenely with them. Help me to not think of myself, instead, help me to think of others and help me be loving and tolerant towards them. Keep me spiritually fit today, by helping me not to fight with anything or anyone – especially alcohol and please God, help me to not drink or use today."

"God, please help me live the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions and all of the principals of C.A. in my entire life. Remove from me my character defects, specifically profanity, dishonesty, arrogance, false pride, sarcasm, pornography, anger, resentment and fear. Watch over me, protect me and care for me. Give me the strength, courage and faith that I need to do your bidding. Keep me mindful of your presence and help me know You better."

"God, should I find myself agitated, doubtful or indecisive today, please give me inspiration, help me have an intuitive thought or decision about this problem I face. Help me not to struggle, instead, help me to relax and take it easy. Help me know what I should do and keep me mindful, that YOU are running the show and not me. Free me from my bondage of self. Thy will be done always."

God, please show me all through this day, what my next step is to be. Give me the strength, faith and courage I need to take care of the problems in my life today. I ask especially that you free me from self-will and fear. Amen.

Literature Corner

Cocaine Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem, and help others to recover from their addiction.

The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using cocaine and all other mind-altering substances.

There are no dues or fees for membership; we are fully self-supporting through our own contributions. We are not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution. We do not wish to engage in any controversy and we neither endorse nor oppose any causes.

Our primary purpose is to stay free from cocaine and all other mind-altering substances, and to help others achieve the same freedom.*

We use the Twelve Steps of Recovery, because it has already been proven that the Twelve Step Recovery Program works.

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**DO YOU THINK
YOU HAVE A PROBLEM WITH**

**COCAINE
OR OTHER DRUGS?**

**COCAINE ANONYMOUS
CAN HELP**

“We’re Here And We’re Free”™

REMEMBERING

For so many years I would wake every day and the first thought was always, I need to use NOW!!!

After some time in the fellowship of Cocaine Anonymous I noticed this stopped happening. I’m not sure exactly when it stopped, I just know it did and has never returned.

From time to time I find I can forget that feeling of total desperation, that fear, loneliness and despair.

That’s when the newcomer is there to help me. A few words with someone new and I remember.

JUST A FINAL THOUGHT

Using for me was never that much fun. For sure there were times when I seemed to be enjoying myself, but when I look back it was nearly always overcast by the knowledge that soon I would need to score again.

I needed to learn how to have fun and my fellows in cocaine anonymous were there to show me.

Today I can find fun in the simplest of things, yet another gift giving to me as a result of getting in the middle of our wonderful fellowship.

Thought: Have I had fun today?