



HOPE, FAITH & COURAGE

WRITE LINES



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

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**If you have any comments or questions related to this publication,
or would like to contribute an article please email:
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MY COMMITMENT TO C.A.

I well remember my first C.A. meeting, almost as if it was yesterday - although in reality it was over seven years ago. I went along with a friend simply because he told me good things about it and I liked the way he conducted himself.

This meeting was to become my home group for the next few years, a regular meeting every week where I knew people and they knew me. A place where I could be comfortable, not only hearing the message of Cocaine Anonymous, but also having the chance to give a little service and carry the message of C.A.

The meeting was, and still is, a Big Book audio meeting. We would listen to a chapter then open the meeting up for members to share. We use the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous in C.A. as our basic text. This is where we get the information to work the Twelve Steps and with that the solution to the life

threatening illness we call drug addiction. We use this book very simply because it works, and has done for a long, long time.

After a short time I took on a commitment, I had been told that if I'm not giving something back to the fellowship I might be stealing. I didn't like the sound of that so I put myself forward as the key person. I had to turn up early and be the last person out at the end of the meeting, this was great for me. A life time of hiding from people was turned around on the spot. Mostly I did okay, but one week I forgot to get the key and no one could get in the building.

I turned up full of fear about what people would say to me and how they would put me down.

In reality someone said "Its okay, lets have the meeting outside" We all sat in a big circle on the cliff top

and the meeting carried on, it was a truly amazing experience. I knew then I would always be welcome in Cocaine Anonymous no matter what mistakes I made.

I also remember the bleak winter night that we had a power cut and people thought the meeting would be cancelled. Not in C.A. Committee members phoned each other and asked members to bring candles, and they did. We sat in candlelight and did the same as we always did; we stuck together and shared our hope.

As time went on my home group changed, my job changed and I moved home. But the love, patience and understanding I found in the fellowship of Cocaine Anonymous has always remained the same.

When I got here I liked it, and I still do. I think I'll stick around.



You're 'Aving a Laff



An alcoholic was staggering down the beach hung-over and sick... His mouth was dry, and he wanted a drink bad... He was checking all the empty cans and bottles hoping to find at least a little to drink.

Eventually he found a bottle, pulled the cork, and out popped a genie.

The genie said "Great, I'm free; I have been in there for 3500 years... You my friend get two free wishes!"

The alky thought about it for a minute, and said, "I want a bottle of wine that will never run dry..."

POOF!

There, in his hands was a fresh bottle of wine. He pulled the cork and took a slug... the bottle refilled itself. "Great" he said.

The genie then said, "Hurry up, I've got some catching up to do, what's your second wish?" With that the alky thought for a minute, and asked the genie, "You got one more bottle like this?"

NO LOOKING BACK

I have not taken a drink or a drug for over five years now (1,924 days) which is amazing for someone like me. I started trying to get clean in 2001 after many years of abusing drugs and alcohol, I started drinking very young and by the time I was 19 I was a fully fledged heroin addict. I found crack cocaine a few years later and my life and my morals just kept going downhill.

I always knew I wanted to be more than a 'junkie' but didn't know how to not use - I would go to bed crying, promising myself I wouldn't use the next day (and meaning it from the bottom of my heart) but the next day I was obsessed with needing to use and always scored. I was using against my will.

Throughout my using things always got worse - never better. I was doing degrading things to myself and others just to get what I needed. But life isn't like that anymore. Since working and living the Twelve Step programme of Cocaine Anonymous my life has improved so much - and continues to do so!

I was first shown the Twelve Steps in my first rehab, but always thought it was a load of crap and laughed at the people who were on 'the programme', of course I always

relapsed and returned to my desperate life while those on the programme recovered.

After six treatment centres I decided that I might as well try this 12 Step thing out - after all, I had nothing left to lose and if it didn't work for me the off licence and dealer would still be there for me!

Well, as I said, that was in December 2004 - and I haven't looked back! Some days, when I look back at how my life was, I am just overwhelmed with gratitude for the life Cocaine Anonymous has given me. Life is not always perfect, bad things happen as it does for all people but I don't have to use drugs to cope with it.

When I started this beautiful journey of recovery I remember worrying who I would become at the end of it all. If this is one of your worries all I can say is think about the person you always wanted to be - this is who you'll become!

All I did was find someone who had been through the Steps, practised the principles on a daily basis and was living a happy life - I then asked that person to show me the way, which she did and continues to do.

JUST A THOUGHT

"It's not what I know in recovery that keeps me clean.
It's what I DO that keeps me clean."

COCAINE ANONYMOUS HELPLINE

TEL: 0800 612 0225

www.cauk.org.uk

'Causes & Conditions' A Step Four WordSearch

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

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

AMBITIONS
BITTERNESS
DISHONEST
FACT FACING
FEARS
FREE
FRIGHTENED
GRUDGE LIST

HONESTY
INVENTORY
MISTAKES
POCKETBOOK
PRIDE
PROMPTLY
RESENTMENT
SECURITY

SELF ESTEEM
SELFISH
SELF SEEKING
SEX CONDUCT
SEX RELATIONS
SOCIAL
SUSPICION
THREATENED

A VITAL AND CRUCIAL STEP

MY FRIEND FOUND ME

I'm very enthusiastic about recovery, Cocaine Anonymous and the Twelve Steps as I now have a genuine life, one that is not free of worries by any means - but one that feels grown up, responsible (I hope I haven't put anyone off yet) and generally pretty peaceful and content.

I certainly couldn't say that prior to coming into contact with Cocaine Anonymous. I first came across C.A. via a friend of mine who did what he was supposed to do, which was pass on the message that recovery from drink and drug addiction is possible. The very way he spoke and how he carried this message to me, the voice I heard on the end of the phonenumber actually sounded alive and enthusiastic which were two things I certainly didn't feel at that time.

If I was to sum it up simply he opened the door to a new possibility and I thought if that hopeless drug addict can do it, why not me? For me this was a key question. Why not me? (though at the time I didn't know what I had to do other than move into his and detox, I felt I had to try whatever it was he was offering).

For years I had been a dreamer, with a vague hope that I would win the lottery or perhaps I would grow out of drug addiction sometime (however I was over thirty so I am not quite sure when this was supposed to happen). Mostly I dreamed dreams that were as far away from reality as I could get. Because the reality was that I had used drugs since my teenage years and they had proceeded to elbow out everything else that was positive and good in my life.

Friends, family and innocent bystanders had all suffered at the hands of me - driven by an insatiable appetite for chemicals of one form or another. For me this was a process over time, I was not the kind of addict who was up and running

immediately but rather with the discovery of each new high became ever more lost until I finally found a drug which rapidly increased my spiral into addiction after many years of getting generally wasted. I felt these effects physically, psychologically and emotionally as I began to need this drug with an intensity of hunger I had never experienced before (I later discovered that the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous identifies these states as a physical craving and a mental obsession, which fit my experience even though mine wasn't with alcohol) simply put, I virtually always seemed to be hungry for more and I couldn't seem to stop thinking about it whether I had it or not. There was always plans to get more, fear of running out, vague dreams of sometimes stopping, dreams of lottery wins where I would be able to buy as much as I needed and then all my problems would be solved, if I ever read something or listened to something or watched something it tended to be drug based. So there I was - clearly a well rounded, care free and happy go lucky character!

I was brought up to know the difference between right and wrong with a sense of how to treat people - yet that voice inside became progressively a whisper, I don't believe it ever disappeared, just that when I instinctively knew that what I

was doing was wrong it was powerless to effect any change upon my behaviour. I knew that it was wrong to steal from my elderly neighbours purse and to pawn all my parents electrical goods but that voice was only the merest whisper in comparison to the unceasing demand to get money (or what I now saw as drug tokens in order to feed my habit) and as I found that demand never seems to be satisfied for long.

I had made half hearted attempts to stop, moved away, been in relationships, not been in relationships, had a job, had no job and the only constant over the years seemed to be my involvement with drink and drugs. Even when I stopped this would only be stopping the use of one substance for another - complete abstinence was unheard of for me, and out of the people I knew I am struggling to think of one person who got clean for any length of time and really changed.

So that is the general description of my life and though I often hear in meetings of Cocaine Anonymous people saying that if they had carried on they would be dead by now I often think that a far more scary scenario for me might be what if I had carried on and were still alive, doing the same desperate things day after day truly living in hell on earth.

This was where my friend found me on the phone - grinding out a pitiful existence day by day when he offered me a chance that I am so totally grateful to have taken. He offered me the chance to come and stay with him in another town and come to some meetings of Cocaine Anonymous (which at the time I hadn't even heard of and wondered why I would need to go as I wasn't even a cocaine addict). He assured me that this didn't matter (as the fellowship is not drug specific) and that a way of changing my life would become available through these meetings. I'm so happy I got over my

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

**COCAINE
OR OTHER DRUGS?**

**COCAINE
ANONYMOUS
CAN HELP**

0800 612 0225

"We're Here And We're Free"™

initial prejudice about the name of the fellowship and decided to take him up on his offer. For once in a very long time I was able to be honest with myself about the desperate person I had become and that I needed help – my surrender began there.

So I arrived in his home town and began my detox in his house and went to my first meeting soon after I had landed. To be honest I don't know how much of those first meetings I really took in but over time and sticking with it, certain pieces of advice (or suggestions) became apparent from those who were further down the line than me in terms of clean time and recovery. These were, get a sponsor (a fellow addict who can take you through the 12 Steps of Cocaine Anonymous as outlined in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous), read the Big Book, get a commitment and generally look to get involved if you truly felt you were hopeless and needed help in transforming your life.

Well, I had moved to this town and I was committed to change but first it was important for me to discover whether I really needed to do the things people were suggesting. That meant finding out whether I identified myself as an addict the way the Big Book described it. Now this isn't really a time for the debating society but I feel the Big Book puts it well when it says something like – if you find that

when you honestly want to you cant stop then you are probably alcoholic (addict in my case) and you may be suffering from an illness which only a spiritual experience can conquer. I believe that for me it was vital to diagnose myself as an addict or the necessary willingness to change would not have been there if I had not become aware of how very serious my situation is. I seem to belong to the school of I only change when it becomes apparent of how much pain I am in – this diagnosis provided the fuel (willingness) for my recovery to both truly begin and continue.

I got a sponsor and learnt about the physical craving for drink and/or drugs the addict feels, the mental obsession about the drugs which overpowers addicts who try to stop on their own steam and like an unstoppable force of gravity always seems to pull the addict back to using drugs. I began to fit parts of my experience to this general outline and really appreciate the necessity of trying something new for the simple reason that all other things I had tried to change had come to nought.

So under the guidance of a sponsor I began to see that the root of my problem was a selfishness and a self centeredness that seemed to underlie my whole life. At first it seemed to be a strange leap of faith to take to see that my drug addiction was closely intertwined with my underlying emotional or

spiritual state but the more I looked at it the more it made sense.

Formerly I had only ever really thought about myself and getting my drugs for more years than I'd care to remember and that hadn't worked particularly well as a template for living life – Clearly! Having established that I was a hopeless case the next stage of the 12 Step programme was to 'Come to Believe' and to source a power that would help me stay clean and sober. It was stressed that it wasn't too important how I conceived of this power but rather that I begin to take a series of actions that would counteract this naturally self centred and self obsessed way I seemed to formerly live my life. I needed to consciously think of others, get into prayer and seeing what I could do to help both other addicts and contribute to society at large. This helped me to feel connected to a Higher Power and the practical results of these actions and this connection are that I have remained abstinent from drink and drugs for over 4 years now.

I simply try to do the right things and be helpful and life is taken care of, don't ask me how but I experience it every day. So the result of getting involved with Cocaine Anonymous and practising the 12 Steps of recovery (a spiritual program of action) is that not only am I drink and drug free but that my overall life is far happier and saner than it has ever been before.

*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*

We Aren't A Glum Lot!

Dear Lord.

So far today, I am doing alright. I have not gossiped, lost my temper, been greedy, grumpy, nasty, selfish or self indulgent. I have not whined, cursed or eaten any chocolate.

However, I am going to get out of bed in a few minutes and I will need a lot more help after that.

Amen

START OF A JOURNEY

Arriving at a treatment centre with a bag of smelly blood stained clothes and a rotten smelly attitude, really could not of thought of a worse place to be and I knew the dreaded cluck was in the post. Angry at everything and everyone, well I say angry but really I was a scared little boy and wanted to use.

This being the fifth treatment centre I had been in I really could not see the point - but it was better then jail or being homeless, this was also the first time I had been told that I had to go to Twelve Step meetings. That meant nothing at this stage apart from the fact that I would have to do loads of walking and being a weak arse junkie and clucking this was not what I wanted to do and made a point of telling everyone. I moaned about this forever, don't you know who I am? (*My first levelling of pride!*)

We had meetings brought into the centre and I liked them, as I didn't have to walk to them. I must say that sitting around was pretty painful. It gave me too much time to think about me, me being the only person of any importance in the world. But I must of heard something in those meetings and I sort of looked up to the people that took the meetings. They had something about them, they

seemed at ease, something I had not felt for a long time.

The fear I felt when they said I was going to have to be drug and drink free for the rest of my life was well, just not right. I didn't come here to be drug free. I could sort of see what they were saying "but no mate, that's not for me" I still love drugs and the life it brings me, (ALREADY STARTING TO BELIEVE THE LIE THAT IT WAS NOT THAT BAD AFTER ALL)

Deep in my heart I didn't think these people were like me, how could they have used like me? How could they be drug free, feel ok and get on with life? That seemed a million miles away from how I was feeling at that moment.

One of the main things I heard was 'one day at a time'. That I thought I could do and some times I just did one minute at a time, the feeling of uselessness and self-pity started to disappear and I started to have a little bit of hope faith and courage.

Now, a few years on my life is very different. What started out as a few simple practical actions and the practice of C.A.'s Twelve Steps, has exploded into a design for living greater then I could ever imagine.

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

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If you have any comments or questions related to this publication,
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JUST A FINAL THOUGHT

Happiness keeps you sweet, Trials keep you strong, Sorrows keep you human,
Failures keep you humble, Success keeps you glowing
BUT ONLY GOD KEEPS YOU GOING!