



HOPE, FAITH & COURAGE

WRITE LINES



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

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He stood in front of me clean

My mother took drugs, my Father took drugs and so did my sister and brother, If you had a family like mine, you would take drugs to. That little statement keep me using flat out for over twenty years with out so much as one days rest.

The truth of the matter is half of my family are no longer with us as a direct result of either drug use, or the lifestyle linked to drug use. Of course this made absolutely no difference to amount of drugs I used , in fact if anything I used more.

When death came to my loved ones I simply increased the amount I used to relieve the pain. When joy came into my life I used drugs to enjoy it more and when life was just life, I used drugs to cope. This was the way it was year after year after year. It all became normal and I didn't have a clue there was a way out. To be honest I'm not even sure I wanted a way out, any hope of that seemed lost long ago.

For me things changed almost without me knowing. Id bumped into an old using friend who hadn't been around for a while. The last time id seen him he was nodding out with a smile on his face and not a care in the world, or at least that's how it looked. Now he stood in front of me claiming he was clean, and had been for some time. To be honest I wasn't sure if I believed him but I thought it would do no harm to listen for a while.

He told me how he had got involved with Cocaine Anonymous, how he had been shown a way out and how he had been clean for over two years. I remember thinking it didn't seem that long since I had last seen him, but deep down I knew it had.

With my interest slightly sparked I began to ask some questions about how he had been doing this. Id used with this fellow and the fact that he was stood in front of me clean proved to me that there must be something in what he was saying.

He then went on to tell me about Cocaine Anonymous. He told me how he regularly attended meeting with other members who shared how they stayed clean. He went on to tell me about his sponsor and how he was taken through the Twelve Steps of C.A. Then he told me the greatest news of all, he told me I would never have to use again. He told me that I was welcome in the fellowship of Cocaine Anonymous and if I wanted to join him, he would show me the way.

This was a few years ago now and I haven't looked back. My friend became my sponsor and remained a man of his word. He has shown me through the Twelve Steps and walked by my side every step of the way. Within the fellowship of Cocaine Anonymous I have been given a new life. Cool eh?

THE SIMPLE STEPS

1. Alcohol & drugs will kill me.
2. There's a power that wants me to live.
3. Do I want to live or die? (If you want to die, stop here)
4. Write about how I got to where I am.
5. Tell another person all about me (let God listen).
6. Want to change.
7. Ask a power greater than me to help me change.
8. Write down who I've hurt.
9. Fix what I can without hurting anyone else.
10. Accept that I'm human and will screw up. Fix it immediately.
11. Ask a power greater than me to show me how to live.
12. Keep doing 1 through 11 and pass it on.



No good to anyone.

Years of using had left me convinced to my very core I was no good to anyone.

The people close to me had all gone, friends, family and loved ones decided it was safer to stay away.

I had always known God existed and now I believed he had left me too, after all, how could anyone including God still love such a low down evil addict? The things I'd done, the people I'd hurt to get what I wanted, what I needed. No, God could never love a person like me. How wrong I was.

Working through the steps with my sponsor gave me a connection with God filled with so much love that today I have no doubt I am loved and wanted by the power in my life I am proud to call God.

At one time even using the word God filled me with unease, but not anymore. To be honest the way I think is, it's just a word, and that suits me just fine.

Just Pray

One of the first things you folks told me I needed to do when I came to C.A. was try praying to a God of my understanding, problem was I didn't understand God at all and to be honest, I didn't want to.

Thankfully I had a sponsor who had the ability to keep things simple enough for me to understand. This was important for me at the time

and the suggestions he gave me for sure set me on the road to long lasting recovery.

Very simply he told me my understanding of God was not as important as the actions I put in. He went on to say try praying even if your not sure who, or what your praying to.

For me, that was enough.

Just a thought

For the love of God,
give me a sign

Cocaine Anonymous World Service Convention



is coming to the U.K.

*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 CAN HELP

**Cocaine Anonymous offer a unique
and valuable opportunity to
correspond with recovered addicts**



**If you would like to be put in touch with a
member of our fellowship please send
your contact details to:**

**CA SCD ICC
PO Box 6258
Bournemouth
BH1 9DR**



We in C.A. want to share what we have learned with other addicts.

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An Answer in The Steps.

I did not think that I was an addict when I arrived at C.A., because I hadn't used Heroin or even Cocaine. I had never injected a substance either. C.A. taught me that the types of drugs I used or the amount and frequency I used was not what made me an addict.

What makes me an addict is the fact that once I start taking drugs I cannot stop. Yet, even knowing this, I cannot prevent myself from picking up that first drug. I was unable, at certain times, to bring into my consciousness with sufficient force the suffering and humiliation of even a week or a month ago. I was without defence against the first drug. This point was smashed home to me at my first meeting.

I tried many ways to control my drug use, but none if it ever worked. I voluntarily locked myself up in a mental ward hoping that this would stop me taking drugs, but I managed to find someone that would sell me some dope in another part of the hospital. I took 'holidays' by myself, thinking that if I was away from my using friends, I would stop. That didn't work because I would end up going to local nightclubs to score.

At the end of my first C.A. meeting, I asked a lady to sponsor me. A sponsor is another addict who will take me through the 12 Step programme of C.A. She asked me if I was willing to go to any lengths to stop using drugs. I said yes, not really knowing what she meant.

I was given a simple daily plan to follow and was reassured that although the programme of C.A. is spiritual, it is not religious. I was asked to pray to a God of my understanding, for help staying clean and sober and to give thanks each evening. I certainly did not believe in any kind of God back then, it wasn't exactly cool! Instead, I prayed to the back of my bathroom door – I remember putting the shower on and flushing the loo so that my boyfriend couldn't hear! It worked; the craving to use a drug disappeared that same day.

I was asked to write a gratitude list. I felt like I had absolutely nothing to be grateful for, but I did it anyway. I started off with things like having a roof over my head, food on the table and a sponsor. After a couple of days I actually started to *feel* grateful for these things and less miserable. My sponsor suggested I buy a copy of the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, which the fellowship of C.A. uses. I simply replace the wording – drink for drugs, alcoholism for addiction etc. I read at least a page every single day.

My sponsor said that the more I put into the programme the more I would get out of it, so I tried to read as much as I could. I found it very hard to concentrate at first and the words did not seem to go in, but that didn't matter, the point was that I was putting the action in.

One of my biggest problems was that I spent too much time thinking about me. For this reason, I was shown that in order to stay clean and sober, I needed to think about others constantly, especially other addicts. Even though I was just a couple of days into this programme, I still had something to offer the newcomer who has just walked into the door of a C.A. meeting. I met up with newcomers for coffee every day, (as I had a job in town) and called them regularly to see how they were getting on. For the first time in my life I felt like had friends and even a bit of a social life!

I chose a home group, where I would attend each week and try to be of service. I helped to set up the meeting and wash up and clear up ashtrays afterwards. I got to know my new friends and joined them for coffee after the meeting. I felt part of something and soon looked forward with anticipation to my next meeting.

I already knew that I was powerless over drugs because I could not stop using them, even though I desperately wanted to. My life was unmanageable because I was trying to live on self-will and force everything to go my way. The insanity described in step two was not the crazy things I did on drugs or the self-harm. It was the thinking that preceded the first drug. No matter how bad the consequence of my last binge had been, I would still think that this time would be different.

When I came to the third step, I said a simple prayer with my sponsor. I handed my will and my life over the care of a power greater than myself – the rest of my life was none of my business. What a relief, to let go of having to control *everything all the time!* From now on what ever happened was the right thing for me.

In my step four, I learnt how to look at my own part in the situations in my life. I had to quit blaming other people. I was shown how my defects of character controlled everything that I thought, said and did. For example, I was a very jealous person and this would sometimes lead to violence against other people.

Once I beat my boyfriend up in a drunken rage because he talked to another girl! At the time, I couldn't see it as my jealousy. I thought that it was *his* fault I behaved like that because *he* was the one misbehaving. I was also extremely prideful and self-centred. I was constantly obsessed by what people thought about me and if anyone wronged me they were in for it!

Self-pity was one of my worst defects; I squandered hours feeling sorry for myself and expecting everyone else to feel sorry for me too. This step showed me that I could never blame anyone ever again. As the Big Book suggests, I shared my fourth step with my sponsor and God. I knew that I had to be fearless and thorough, but I was sure that I would be judged for the things that I had done. I honestly believed that my sponsor would not want to come anywhere near me once she knew the 'real' me. This did not happen. I was told that I was just an average addict! After sharing these things with God and another human being, I felt that I could look the world in the eye for the first time in my entire life.

Step six was a simple question; was I willing to have *all* of these defects removed. Well, of course I was – they caused me pain. There was a few that I quite enjoyed, but I prayed for the willingness to have them taken away. My sponsor and I said a prayer together, asking God to remove my character defects. Unfortunately, for the people around me, they still come back most days. However, now I have a way of dealing with them and keeping them at a level that enables me to function and get on with people.

In my Step Eight, I had the opportunity to look hard at the harms I had caused other people. I wrote down a list of all those I had harmed, the nature of the harm and how I would feel if these things were done to me. In the majority of cases I used words as strong as devastated, abused, suicidal and victimized. It really showed me to look at things from a different viewpoint. No wonder I had ended up feeling so terrible and had to take drugs to deal with my pain – as I give to the world so the world will give to me! This step really made me want to change; I did not want to carry on being that kind of person anymore. If I truly wanted to stop hurting people, I needed to continue working this programme and I had to be serious about it.

Step nine gave me a wonderful opportunity to make amends to those people I had harmed. These were all carried out under the careful guidance of my sponsor. I asked forgiveness for my unforgivable behaviour and enquired if there was anything else I could do to put right my wrongs. In most cases people didn't 'throw me out of the office'. My friends, family and colleagues wished me well and simply told me to carry on going to meetings and following my sponsor's suggestions.

What I have today is a 'daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of my spiritual condition'. For this reason, I have to continue practising the steps every day. The big Book tells me that I must 'continue to take personal inventory and continue to set right any new mistakes as we go along'. This is step ten. The eleventh step encourages me to focus on the spiritual side of the programme through prayer and meditation. It enables me to feel freer, calmer and saner.

Carrying the message to the still suffering addict and service are integral parts of step twelve. They both bring me more joy and satisfaction than any drug ever could.

If you are new to C.A. and looking for a way out of your misery, then why not give us a go?

You can find a meeting near you by clicking on the 'where to find meetings' tab, alternatively you can call our National Helpline number **0800 612 0225**. They can put you in contact with a member of C.A. in your area who will arrange to take you to your first meeting.

Just a thought

How many ways can I serve my fellow man today?



Service

Very early in my recovery I heard someone say, "if you have any clean time as a result of this fellowship, and you are not giving something back, you might be a thief"

I had spent years stealing from every one I could get close to so this statement cut close to the bone. I did not want to be a thief any more.

I jumped in to service at my home group. From this simple act I have learned to serve and think of others in all areas of my life, both in and out of CA.

I serve my fellowship at many different levels and I love it, but more importantly this gift of service has leaked out and I now take it with me where ever I go.

Today

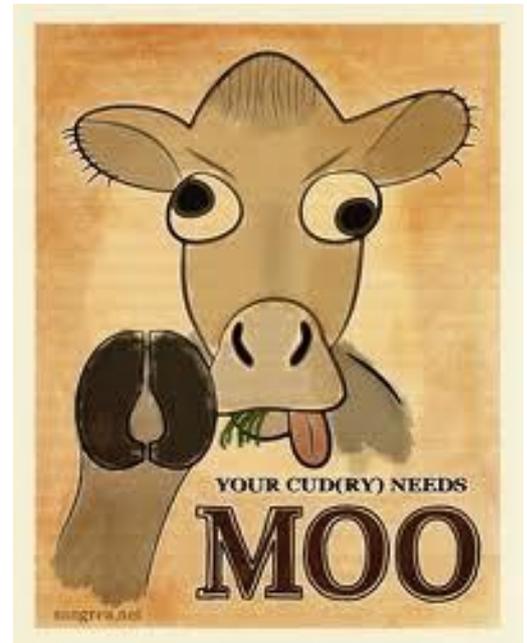
This morning I got up this morning washed and shaved and got dressed for work. Now that would be a miracle just in its self. But it gets better I then spent 20 minutes reading some spiritual literature including pages 84 to 89 of the Big Book Alcoholics Anonymous.

This always sets me up to consider my plans for the day. I then spent the next 20 minutes in prayer and meditation raising my consciousness to the realization that the love of God fills and surrounds me and that Gods will for me today is good.

I was then able to go to work with assurance that I was going to be as happy as I make up my mind to be.

I'm now coming to the end of my working day and guess what? not once have I thought about using any mind altering chemicals, I've not wanted to hurt any body and I'm looking forward to getting home and reviewing my day when I retire tonight .

Today I am a grateful recovered addict with the love and the power of God in his life.



AND WRITLINES NEED YOU TOO

Written by C.A members for C.A members we need your submissions to keep this publication going.

Experience, jokes, poems etc, etc. Why not have a go and send something in. Its a great way to carry the message of Cocaine Anonymous and reach out to people you might never even meet. Simply send your submission to address below and we'll do the rest.

**CAUK H&I,
PO Box 6258,
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Just Joking

A newcomer asked his sponsor about the difference between a non-alcoholic, a potential-alcoholic, and the hopeless-alcoholic, explaining that he was confused by this terminology in the Big Book. So the sponsor took the new comer to the raunchiest bar in town.

Upon arriving, they stopped out back and sifted through the dumpster for flies. This seemed strange to the sponsee, but he did not question the old-timer. When they had collected enough dead flies they entered the bar.

Soon a fight broke out, and everyone in the bar rushed over to watch it, except for the two CA's. The sponsor began dropping flies into beers at the bar. When the fight broke up everyone returned to their seats.

One man picked up his beer, noticed the fly, and promptly asked the bartender for another draft. "That", said the sponsor "is what we call a non-alcoholic." A second man sat down, noticed the fly in his drink, tossed it aside, and drank his beer anyway. "That's what we call a potential-alcoholic", said the sponsor. The newcomer then said "If that's only a POTENTIAL-alcoholic, then what the hell is a hopeless-alcoholic?"

Before he could finish a third man sat down at the bar, picked the fly out of his beer, held it up to his face, and yelled "SPIT IT OUT, YOU SON OF A BITCH!!! SPIT IT OUT!!!"