



HEARING THE TRUTH

BY DEB

Defeated, I lay in my cell wondering why I couldn't get this 12-step thing. I had been around for 26 years. Some people may think I am crazy, and others may understand. In that cell that night, while dope sick, I heard a voice say, "It's step one for you."

I did 24 months in a correctional facility, I recall one fellowship once a week in the afternoon, and another on Friday nights. I went a few times, getting nothing out of either one of them. I spent 18 months in another correctional facility, never seeing a 12-step meeting. Then, I went to a Drug treatment center, and we had to learn to recite the 12-steps to move up in the ranks. I spent some time in another correctional facility, and they did have a 12-step meeting in which the 2 women came into the day room of the dorm. It was quite embarrassing because nobody showed up and the inmates were so disrespectful. I can't blame my lack of understanding/exposure to the 12-steps on anyone, because anybody can pick up the Big Book and follow the directions...if I had only known about that.

It is my feeling that the opioid epidemic and Heroin Anonymous have brought the 12-steps back into the spotlight as it was back in the 30s and 40s, there isn't much else to this stuff but 12-step work. My favorite commitment since being home was the meetings in our local jails. It is unfortunate that I lost those commitments after 2 years. They reported I should have never been allowed in, due to my criminal history. I will never give up submitting a clearance form. People are dying and don't know there is a simple way out, they just need to HEAR the TRUTH.



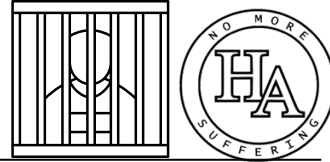
JAIL AND RECOVERY (OR LACK THEREOF)

BY MITCH

Being incarcerated you would think there would be some type of recovery, but in my experience you would be wrong. During my first incarceration, all I could think of was getting out. Getting clean and finding a solution wasn't even an afterthought. Of course, like everyone, I had these grand ideas about how I was going to stay clean or what I considered clean (meaning no pills) and turn my life around. I never thought for a second, I couldn't stop, and at this point in my life I still didn't know anything about the rooms or recovery. Once I got released I found myself getting into the car asking for pills. This led to more years of misery plus a heroin addiction. It also led to my second incarceration.

My second time being incarcerated was a thousand times worse than the first. I was withdrawing so badly that I had to have a blood transfusion and get 2 bags of blood. Plus, I was in a wheelchair because I broke my heel running from the police. This is the first time in my life though that I would hear about recovery and the 12 steps. The sad part is it had nothing to do with the jail or anyone within the jail. It was my brother coming to visit me talking about recovery, meetings, and the 12 steps. I was quick to tell him to fuck off. But, even though that was my reaction, if jail offered any form of recovery I might have tried it because my brother seemed genuinely happy for the first time I could remember.

Truth is though, jail doesn't offer any type of recovery or way to find recovery short of getting a program after. There were no meetings, no solution, no nothing. Just me and my mind, filled with anger, hate, sadness, regret, despair, and blame. I lived every day like the outside world didn't exist. If I didn't, I would have driven myself crazy. I was constantly on guard all the time pushing down any type of empathy, sympathy, or any other type of emotion that could be considered a weakness. I believe that it's this mentality that is one of the biggest hurdles when trying to find recovery in jail. You can't look vulnerable and the only way to recover is to get vulnerable.

**ONLY BY THE GRACE OF GOD**

BY SEAN B.

I recently moved home to my aunt's house, where I lived before I got sober. The other day I was cleaning out my closet and found old letters, birthday cards, pink slips for commissary, and a bunch of things from my time in prison. It brought me back to 2007 when I got arrested for selling cocaine to undercover police. I didn't know that I would have to go away and do four years. I didn't know that I would have to be introduced to a drug program called CASAT (Comprehensive Alcohol Substance Abuse Treatment). It was the first time I'd ever been in rehab. Crazy, right? The first time I was ever in rehab, was in a prison and I didn't know that I was even in rehab. They talked about triggers, they talked about warnings, and I'm sure they brought up 12-step fellowships, but all I cared about was completing the program to get home to my family. It never occurred to me that I was an addict and that doing drugs was a problem in my life...even though drugs have been part of my life, from the time I was 12 years old.

I didn't do much getting high in jail or prison. During my first year in county, I had a heroin-addicted roommate, and the first time I ever did heroin was in our cell in the jail with him. It wasn't a constant thing, but I loved the feeling of it and it was a great escape from what I was going through. I smoked some weed but for the most part, I stayed dry in jail because I didn't want to go to solitary confinement. I came home from jail still not knowing I had such a big problem with drugs.

My story with heroin addiction begins when I got out of jail. As I said, I didn't want to deal with life on life's terms so I went from smoking K2, which is essentially fake weed, to doing prescription opiate pills, which then turned into heroin. When I found heroin I tried to balance not going back to prison with being able to stay high as much as I could.

I went to 10 rehabs in the interim and to 3 long-term facilities and countless detoxes. I did not find any other 12-step fellowships until after my time in prison. But the thing that got me sober this time was the threat of actually having to go back to prison. I was facing 4 to 8 years and I was at a crossroads. I was either going to go back to prison and continue living the way I was living or I was going to make a change.

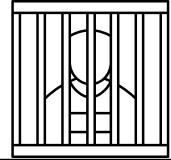


I had been to a 12 step fellowship before, I had done what I thought were the steps before, but I didn't have the honesty, the open mindedness and the willingness to do this the way it is outlined in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. It wasn't until I had this gift of desperation and the thought of maybe having to go away to prison for a long time again that I was willing to try something different.

I went through the steps, I got a sponsor, and I did the work to the best of my ability, and ever since then I haven't had to step foot inside of a jail cell. I can only pray it remains that way, that I never have to go through any of this physical, mental, emotional anguish or trauma that is associated with going to prison ever again. I like being able to eat what I want to eat. I like being able to leave, and come and go as I please. I like being able to turn on and off the TV without a grown man telling me to do so. I like not being counted like cattle and sheep. I like being treated with the basic dignity that every human being is granted and afforded. Heroin Anonymous saved my life, and for that, I am very thankful. Not only am I grateful for my physical freedom that comes with not going back to jail, but the true freedom: the freedom from active addiction. Freedom from my mind telling me I need something to get through the day, that's the freedom to go anywhere I want on this planet and not have to worry about picking up heroin. Only by the grace of God.

AA Big Book, 4th Edition - Page 318

Life has not heaped monetary riches upon my head, nor have I achieved fame in the eyes of the world. My blessings cannot be measured in those terms. No amount of money or fame could equal what has been given me. Today I can walk down any street, anywhere, without the fear of meeting someone I've harmed. Today I reside among the living, no better, no worse than any of God's children. Today I look in the mirror when putting on my makeup and smile, rather than shy away from looking myself in the eye. Today I fit in my skin. I am at peace with myself and the world around me.



Upcoming Events & Announcements

"The Horse's Mouth" is a bulletin sent bi-monthly with the purpose to maintain communication, of our fellowship's growth, keeping members informed of recent HA business, and requesting input on important matters from members.

To inspire our readers and acknowledge milestones in this journey, we would like to feature your story in one of our upcoming newsletters. Please send us a personal article, art, or poem, containing no more than 400 words, depicting your experience, strength, and hope with addiction to

THEHORSESMOUTH.HA@GMAIL.COM

Recovery Jeopardy



FRIDAY MARCH 24TH, 2023

HELL & BACK - PORT JEFF

HOPE HOUSE MINISTRIES, 1 HIGH ST.

7PM - SPEAKER & SHARING

8:15PM - 9:15PM RECOVERY JEOPARDY

- 50/50 Raffle
- Prizes
- Refreshments
- Fellowships & FUN!

Come & bring a friend to help support HA,
Recovery & the Fellowship!



Upcoming Events & Announcements

New Meeting Spotlight...

WOMEN'S MEETING

Saturdays @ 2:00P.M. EST

In-person at

Thrive Recovery Center

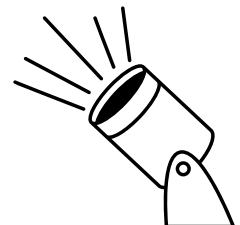
1324 Motor Parkway

Suite 102

Hauppauge, NY 11749

AND ON ZOOM

MEETING ID: 444 138 7459



HA AREA

NOW MEETS THE THIRD SUNDAY
OF EVERY MONTH AT 10AM
IN PERSON AT
THE THOMAS HOPE FOUNDATION
755 WAVERLY AVENUE -
HOLTSVILLE, STE 205

AND ON ZOOM

MEETING ID: 444 138 7459

HELP OUR FELLOWSHIP GROW,
HAVE YOUR VOICE HEARD
AND HELP SPREAD THE HA
MESSAGE

TRADITIONS CORNER

2ND TRADITION

"For our group purpose, there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern"

FOLLOW US FOR UPDATES ON EVENTS & MEETINGS



WEBSITE: WWW.HALONGISLAND.ORG

24 HR. HOTLINE - (631) 210-6297

