

Managing the Unmanageable - Ashley

Selfishness and self-centeredness they say is the root of my problem. When I got to HA I had nothing and was completely broken. After being released from jail, I was placed in a sober house where I was required to attend meetings. All I wanted was a successful life and to stop using heroin. Admitting and accepting that I was a heroin addict and that my life was unmanageable was pretty evident, and I honestly embraced the idea of handing over my heroin addiction to you all. But when it came to surrendering everything else—my beliefs, relationships, outcomes, etc.—I still wanted to control and manipulate those things. I really believed that if I could just stop shooting heroin my life would be great. However, despite my 10 months of abstinence, I continued to feel restless, irritable, and discontent. Although I had stopped using drugs, I was still hanging onto the worst part—myself. I didn't understand that I was the problem and that the drugs were my solution. Going back to jail with the same COs and inmates was extremely humbling. God did for me what I couldn't do for myself; he removed me from everything on the outside, leaving only myself. In those days back in jail, I at last understood that I was the problem—not the drugs. Desperation is a true gift, and pain is a powerful motivator, without either I wouldn't have been willing to finally surrender.

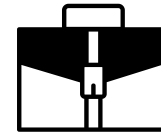
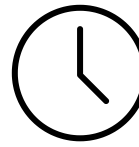
Our program is a program of action that requires me to destroy self. By destroying self, I can tap into a power greater than myself, allowing me to recover from my heroin addiction and restore me to sanity. In addition to being released from the bondage of self, I now have this purpose of being uniquely useful to help other heroin addicts by sharing my experience on how I recovered. I once heard someone say that we all have our own spiritual blueprints, and I felt that within my soul. I know that everything I experience today is for a reason and that reason is to help another suffering heroin addict. When I first started working the steps, I looked at them as a chore that needed to be completed; I was unaware that each step has a principle attached to it that should be followed by practical application rather than merely as a task. These principles are my design for living, and it has given me a life that exceeds my greatest expectations. It might sound corny, but not to a heroin addict who used to shoot up with toilet bowl water.

After a while in this program and obtaining many gifts such as money, a car, a job, and relationships, I became immersed in self again, what I like to refer to as 'luxury problems'. I began to withdraw from HA and slowly started to feel restless, irritable, and discontent yet again. I thought I needed to "find myself" and concentrate more on the things I believed would give me happiness. What I discovered was that I didn't need to find myself; instead, I needed to lose myself. No matter how much I know the Big Book, if I stop living by spiritual principles and rest on my laurels, I'm in trouble. The dictionary states that resting on one's laurels is defined as being so content with one's accomplishments that one ceases to make further effort. Since the root of all my problems are that I'm selfish and self-centered, the solution is to be more selfless. Self sacrifice is essential for me to have a happy, joyous, and free life. The idea is simple; I just complicate it.

This program and God have given me so much. Throughout my recovery, there have been countless instances when I have felt overwhelmed and afraid of not having enough time to do the things I needed to do. I need to pause, take a step back, and remind myself that I am no longer in the results business. Finding balance in recovery is extremely difficult when you are trying to control and manipulate every aspect of your life. I have come to learn that it is best to focus on each day as it comes and really work Steps 10 and 11 daily. Before going to bed at night, I need to constructively review my day so that I know what I'm going to bring into morning meditation the next day. Our book tells us that under these conditions, we can employ our mental faculties with assurance, for after all God gave us brains to use. By God's grace, I am approaching 8 years in a few days, and all I know is that I continue to put God and this program first. I have a home group, a sponsor, sponsees, commitments, a full-time student, employed, married and I take my brother and grandmother to all of their appointments. Although sometimes I feel I have too much on my plate, I recently heard from someone who said that they started to feel overwhelmed and told their sponsor, "My plate is overflowing; I can't take on another commitment." Their sponsor then said, "I don't know about you, but my plate just keeps getting bigger."

Today, I can clearly see how God is at work in my life. For instance, someone in the program asked me to share my experience on the very thing I had recently overcome after struggling with it for a while. God worked through someone in this program to gently remind me that I am exactly where I am supposed to be. Through my experience, I've discovered that as long as I trust God, clean house, and help others my life will always work out. I am no longer in the results business. Putting my sobriety first and continuing to take things one day at a time makes life a little easier.

Because nothing, absolutely nothing, happens in God's world by mistake.



First Things First - Jess

It could be really easy for me to say “I talk to addicts all day, I don’t need to go to meetings or sponsor anyone”. I’ve seen people do it. Whether this has been successful or not is up to them.

For me to be successful in my career, I must be firmly planted in recovery. If I am to help others accept the things they cannot change and find the wisdom to change the things they can- I must continue on my path in the program of Heroin Anonymous. For me to be successful, happy, joyous and free- I must continue.

I thought I could write an entire book about this but it is so much more simple than what I initially set out to write. I cannot afford the all-or-nothing mentality. I cannot afford to put my work, my image, my needs and wants above my recovery.

It has been my experience time and time again, that when I focus my energy on my Higher Power and the 12 Steps- balance finds me.

I'll Never Be Cured is my Motivation - Joe

So I recently just celebrated 10 years of continuous sobriety this weekend and I have been reflecting upon how my life has changed in virtually every single way. Literally, everything in my life is a direct result of me getting and staying sober one day at a time and I am forever grateful.

I think back to my early sobriety when I was a few months sober. I was complaining to my sponsor that I had to “go back to work”. At that point in my recovery, I was making like 2 and sometimes 3 meetings a day. I was 33 years old at the time and would ride my skateboard to a day meeting a couple of miles from where I was living and at night I would have people pick me up for night meetings from people I began to meet along the way. I was taking the suggestions of having a group, commitment and was working the steps but had a whole lot of time on my hands and dealing with chronic boredom.

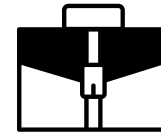
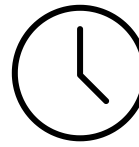
I remember one night after my home group telling my sponsor about a plan I had for going back to work of what I was going to do and when I asked for his advice he responded, “I think you should just keep doing what you are doing and be patient because it seems to be working”. Reluctantly I took his advice because after all, my way was killing me. A couple of months later I went back to work at a local restaurant waiting tables and while working at that job I was offered a position at my current place of employment where I have been for the past 8 years.

They say hindsight is 20/20 and if it wasn’t for me taking that advice I wouldn’t have the career that I have today that allows me to not only get by financially but thrive. As a result of having gone through the steps and having had a spiritual awakening, as a result, the real question is how do I continue to stay willing when I am no longer desperate? I had a sponsor 20 years ago tell me that my sobriety is a “1” and everything else is a “zero” and as long as I keep my sobriety first and add zero’s the number will always continue to grow, but if I remove the “1” all I have is a bunch of zero’s.

Finding the balance of living life on life’s terms can be very tricky and each day I am given an opportunity to balance the day but I must keep my sobriety first because although I have had a spiritual awakening, I can very easily go back to sleep. The irony in that is I won’t even know it’s happening and that is the subtle insanity of my disease. The program offers me a daily reprieve, not a cure and I have found that one day at a time I can stay sober. What used to be just a willingness to believe has grown into a faith based on my experience and if it’s working why would I stop? My experience is most people stop living the daily program and no longer attend meetings or fellowship because they think they can because they “feel better” and a lot of us know how that works out eventually if they have the same disease I have.

Just for today, I continue to still be an active member of my home group, I still make 4 and sometimes 5 meetings a week. I still have a sponsor and sponsor others and twice a month I bring a meeting into a facility where I went to my very first meeting 25 years ago. Thank God I survived long enough to be willing to go to any lengths to get it and for me, I will never have to worry about going “back to the basics” if I just continue, improve and practice one day at a time. Everyone’s life is different and some people just do not have the time that others have to balance everything but only you know the truth. To thy own self be true because after all, you are the one who is either going to reap the rewards or suffer the consequences.

I am just extremely grateful that I was able to build a foundation in early sobriety and keep it very simple. Those habits have followed me as the years have gone on and have paid off. When I find myself getting overwhelmed, stressed and feeling I just don’t have enough time in the day I can pause and remind myself that in reality, I have luxury problems today. Each day is a gift and each day is an opportunity to practice this thing we call recovery. I could never give back to what was so freely given to me but one day at a time I will continue to try to do what others have done for me. Not because I have to but because I want to and most importantly because it works.



Keep It Simple - Alex

Juggling both work and recovery can be a difficult feat, especially in the beginning stages of sobriety. Learning how to prioritize both without spreading yourself too thin takes time and practice. Oftentimes, people focus on one over the other and are left feeling overwhelmed and frustrated. While it may seem impossible, with time and effort a balance can be found.

Getting sober is a challenge in itself. Staying sober and also trying to manage everyday life occurrences can feel especially anxiety-inducing for addicts like us. We become clear-minded for the very first time, in what feels like forever, and start hearing about the different suggestions we should be following to maintain our sobriety. We get a home group, a commitment, and a sponsor, and start helping the newcomer. Generally, after we start making these strides for our recovery, we slowly but surely begin to gain things back in our life that wouldn't be there otherwise. Our family begins to trust us again, we are showing responsibility for ourselves and others, and we are now wondering what we can do to further improve ourselves in other aspects of our lives. Getting a job and working can help to keep our minds busy and help us to stay productive. Unfortunately, many times, especially when a person first gets clean, money and work can be stressors, and an individual may feel pressured into getting a job immediately because of this. In active addiction, many of us weren't reliable and could not hold a steady job. Many people often find themselves in debt after years of drug use and feel the pressure to make that money back as quickly as they can to stay afloat. Money troubles aside, some people overcompensate and dive into work as a distraction to replace their addiction to drugs and alcohol. It is easy to not even realize you are slowly stepping further away from your support group and meetings when you get some time under your belt and begin to have more and more responsibilities. It is easy to think "I'm doing well, I don't need to go to a meeting tonight" and that starts to become your new way of thinking. Being able to balance both work and recovery is something that may take some trial and error. Your recovery isn't "perfect" and doesn't have to be, but it is imperative to remember where you came from to where you are now. It can feel unnecessary and monotonous to have to continue being so involved in meetings and recovery. Work may feel like your top priority now, but with practice and time, you will learn how to prioritize each. This is something you can discuss with your sponsor or support group and is a struggle almost everyone goes through so you will never feel alone.

Neither recovery nor work should feel like they are consuming your life and while you will lose anything you put before your recovery, that doesn't mean you should only focus on recovery either. Getting sober gives you a chance to have a life and should not be your whole life. Work can be a challenge for anyone, addict or not, and figuring out how to navigate both healthily may seem impossible at times. With practice, it gets more manageable and you begin to better understand what works and what doesn't. Find a home group that you can generally always make, even with your work schedule, and try to map out at least a few meetings per week that you can attend that work around your schedule. Regardless of when you work, there are meetings at all times of the day so you can find at least one that does not interfere with work and you can even find zoom meetings that might be more easily accessible for you depending on your schedule. These things take some practice but are obtainable if you are willing to put in the effort.

Mid 20s: adulthood; a long itinerary of things to do

The days run into each other almost seamlessly seeming to match each other effortlessly as if placed on a conveyor belt

Gluing the pieces together, in assembly line style one after the other

Vast mental fog, a wrench thrown into the vast base of the archaic capitalist machine

Hitting it right where it hurts, in its opaque grays and it's somewhat earthly shades of green

Being submerged into the deep belly of my psyche was probably last on the docket of a worker

I still checked it off - as of lately

I have no time to wash my dirty socks and shoes

I need something fast now, like a vacation in the dead of an obstinate winter

I need something soothing later, that felt like peace in the gory combat zone of my mind

By this point, me and death were only on a top secret need to know basis

Meaning I was shown things that only the dead needed to know

That would help me get the job done good and right

That would be efficient, and done from the inside

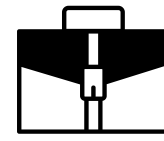
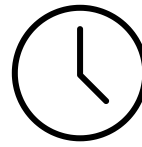
I had to get well again - I had to learn to live once more, handicapped by my inability to handle life

I've retired the skeletons in my cupboard, the Chianti that once had me bound

Am I heavy because I am filled with the truth?

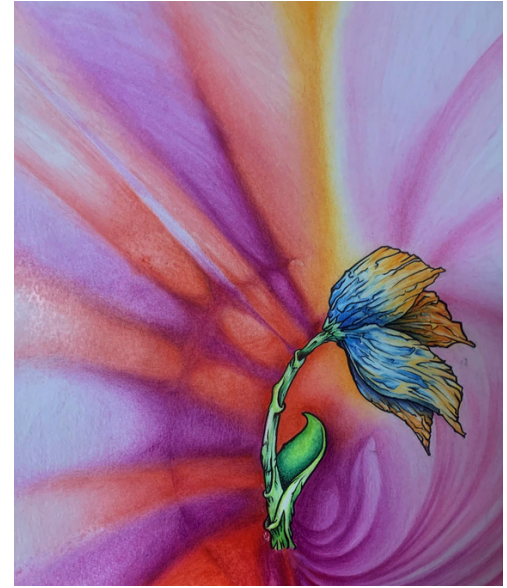
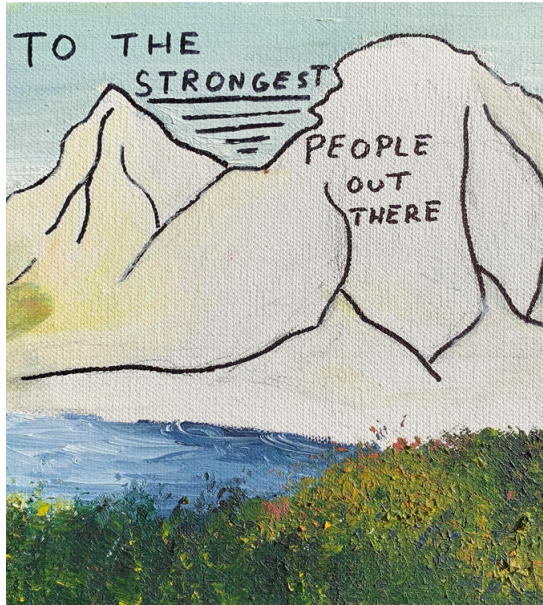
Why is it that in order to grow I have to surmount a certain amount of chaos?

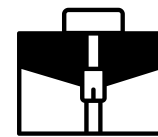
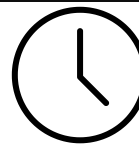
BALANCING WORK AND RECOVERY



WORK
EDITION

Art Contributions From Our Members





EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

H A A R E A

**MEETS THE THIRD
THURSDAY OF THE
MONTH AT 9:30PM
5 MAPLE ST.
BLUE POINT**

Help our fellowship grow, have your voice heard & enjoy free snacks

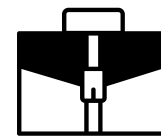
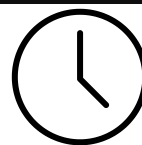
TRADITIONS CORNER

1 1 T H T R A D I T I O N

"Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films."

Our relations with the general public should be characterized by personal anonymity. We think H.A. ought to avoid sensational advertising. Our names and pictures as H.A. members ought not be broadcast, filmed, or publicly printed. Our public relations should be guided by the principle of attraction rather than promotion. There is never need to praise ourselves. We feel it better to let our friends recommend us.

BALANCING WORK AND RECOVERY



**WORK
EDITION**

THANKSGIVING CELEBRATION

*TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 15TH
5 MAPLE STREET, BLUE POINT
TIME: TBD*

*"THANKS FOR GIVING BACK"
POTLUCK STYLE*



FOLLOW US FOR UPDATES ON EVENTS & MEETINGS

 **@halongisland**

website: www.halongisland.org

24 hr. hotline - (631) 210-6297

"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