

# Expressions in Recovery

A digest for people in recovery describing their current state of mind, progress and future outlook



**H**istory is marked by moments of change. These moments usher in new times, new lives, new perspectives, and for some—complete reversals.

Our personal histories in recovery are marked by unforgettable moments of struggle, courage and clarity. How we define, accept and react to these special moments can set the tone for the rest of our lives.

## **Our Mission**

OUR MISSION IS TO PROMOTE HOPE, FAITH AND A BELIEF THAT TOGETHER IN THIS JOURNEY OF HEALING AND GROWTH, OF RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE ANYTHING WE STRIVE TO ACHIEVE IS POSSIBLE.

TO FACILITATE THIS MISSION, THIS NEWSLETTER—YOUR NEWSLETTER WAS CREATED. THIS FORUM WAS CREATED BY AND FOR THOSE IN RECOVERY TO GIVE A VOICE TO OUR CONCERNS, HOPES AND TALENTS.

## **Rules for Submission**

ART, POETRY, PROSE, TRUE OR FICTIONAL STORIES ARE WELCOME. THE PURPOSE OF THIS NEWSLETTER IS TO PROVIDE HOPE, FAITH AND INFORMATION. IN KEEPING WITH THE SPIRIT OF THIS ENDEAVOR ALL CONTRIBUTIONS MUST BE FREE FROM PROFANITY AND VULGARITY.

## **Department Descriptions**

### **Here and Now**

BRIEF STATEMENTS OR PARAGRAPHS FROM PEOPLE IN RECOVERY DESCRIBING THEIR CURRENT STATE OF MIND, PROGRESS, AND FUTURE OUTLOOK.

### **Feature Stories**

ACTUAL LIFE EXPERIENCES INCLUDING INDIVIDUAL RECOVERY STRUGGLES AND TRIUMPHS.

### **Expressions in Recovery Poetry, prose, art etc.**

### **Last Word (in closing)**

INSPIRATIONAL SUMMARY BY THE EDITOR OR GUEST CONTRIBUTORS.



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# From the Editor

***Editor's Note:***

Each of our lives has defining moments. Our lives can be transformed by these unforgettable moments of intervention, tragedy, unforeseen circumstances, and for some, spiritual awakenings.

This issue is devoted to these special moments. Some were brutal, unexpected and traumatic. Others were beautiful, spiritual and long-awaited.

All in all, the ultimate result was a navigational path on the road to recovery. Let's travel along as we share these defining moments of change on the pages of: "Expressions in Recovery"

Gil Gadson

# Here and Now



## The Turning Point

**M**y moment was lying in an institution. I had just heard a lecture given by one of the hospital staff. He spoke of letting the God of your understanding intervene on your behalf and in your affairs. What struck me was that his life story resembled my own.

I experienced a flashback. My whole life played out in my mind. My self-destructive path was laid bare.

*Darryl Savage*

**I**relapsed, I went back out, and almost died. I started shaking, feeling like I had a cold but what was really happening was that my heart was failing. My muscles spasmed uncontrollably. I was terrified. I kept floating in and out of consciousness. Then I fell asleep, and slept a whole day. When I awakened, I knew it was time to change.

*Joshua Holloway*

**I**was apprehensive, defensive and scared. A kind sincere face—a person in recovery who really cared and showed concern appeared. She asked if I had eaten, she asked if I felt like talking. Her whole demeanor sparked my resolve. She calmed me, and most of all, made me want to trust and start anew.

*Gil Gadson*

**I**wanted to commit suicide. I cried myself to sleep and woke up at Penns Landing. I checked myself into a hospital, I was done.

I accepted every opportunity to live, every bit of advice that came my way. I knew at this point I was ready to tackle the rough road ahead. I had nothing to lose.

Everything was better than where I had come from. This was my turning point

*Len Walter*

**“I**n 43 years, you have nothing, you’re doing nothing and you are going nowhere.” These words rang in my head.

Even as I went out and got high again, those words would

not leave me alone. It started one day as I tried to call my dealer on my phone. The person I was trying to call to buy drugs had the same name as a person who was running an innovative program known for success.

The program director answered my call. He was the one who made the above statement. A statement that made me think. It made me examine my life and take that first step—my turning point.

*Wendell Bates*

**D**oing the same thing over and over again—producing no results. I was disgusted and depressed. My life had gotten to the point where I couldn’t maintain anything at all.

In desperation, I knew it was time to change. Blessings led me to a place called Hands of Diversity for Help. A place where I now reside and grow.

*Willie Evans*

**M**y spirit was broken. I was suffering from depression, anxiety attacks, suicidal thoughts and hopelessness. Through the fog of hopelessness and a deteriorating mental state, I found some clarity.

I fought and prayed until people who cared appeared and pointed me in the right direction. Peace has entered my life now as I remember my turning point.

*Luz Rosado*

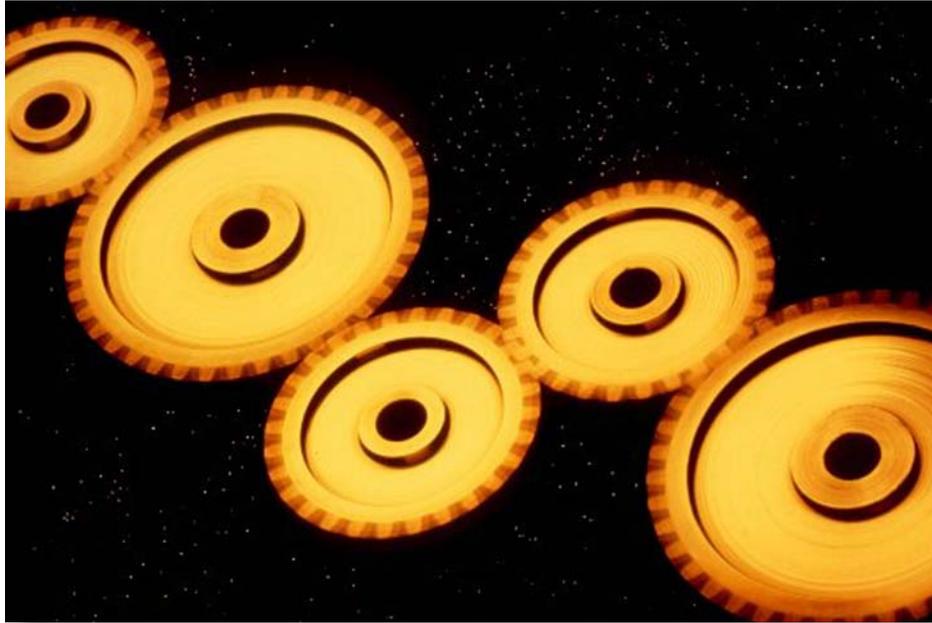
**I**was on my last run. I looked around me and was disgusted. I started throwing things at people in frustration. In reality, I was angry at myself.

I was there with them so what did that make me. Something had to change. I went to get some coffee and looked at the newspaper and the horoscopes caught my eye. My horoscope read “Don’t change your plans, a lot of people are counting on you.”

I don’t particularly believe in horoscopes, but the truth is the truth. I had been making plans to change my life but had been procrastinating. To me the message was clear. It was time to grow up, be a woman and change my life.

*Valerie Pettiford*

# Beyond the turning point



At this point, life begins again. New awakenings, feelings revealed and dreams unveiled and realized. Hope is restored as a new vision and strength guides us forward.

## Today I truly believe that each human being is a masterpiece in spite of our faults.

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I could now smell fresh clothes and clean bed sheets, the aroma of breakfast cooking, clean socks, and clean underwear. I can brush my teeth, and enjoy the warmth of a bed with uninterrupted peaceful sleep.

Having people just say good morning because they wanted to and wanted nothing in return. Feeling the clean, pure difference between love and lust. Having a woman look at me now as a man instead of a boy, and as a companion instead of an adversary. Feeling welcome and wanted.

Being able to make a difference in other people's lives as well as my own. All this came from buying into a process that works.

Today, I truly believe that each human being is a masterpiece in spite of our faults. This moves me to love others as I love myself and recognize the beauty in us all.

*Wendell Bates*

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Being able to gather my thoughts. Thinking of my mother who has passed and knowing she would be proud of her son who has regained hope and a clear vision of life.

My father, who has been solid as a rock through all of what I've gone through, is happy, relieved and elated at the son who has made a sincere effort and changed his ways of lies, manipulation, chaos, confusion and self - destruction.

Although this new road is difficult at times to navigate, partly due to physical problems, I still persevere and maintain an unshakeable belief in my higher power that keeps me able to live this new way of life.

My dream is to complete my higher education from bachelor's degree to master's so I can help others the way someone helped me. I am extremely happy. Sometimes it seems that things are not happening fast enough but it took me 20 years to get to this place, so a little more time can't hurt because I'm enjoying the ride.

*Darroll Savage*

# Beyond the turning point



I'm so blessed. I have no real complaints right now. In the morning when I wake, my spirit is strong. I am happy in my own skin. I work hard, sometimes too hard. In retrospect it only makes me even happier, and I'm overflowing with gratitude.

I work with hospice patients. My job requires me to make my patients comfortable—sometimes in their own homes. Some of them die. I now look at death differently. I'm not so afraid. I don't want to die, but when it comes for me, the life I live now outweighs my fear because of what I know I do for others.

*Valerie Pettiford*

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I now work in the field of recovery as a peer specialist. I've been blessed to find out what it means to love what you do. I can't call this work—it's a blessing. It's a privilege and an opportunity to learn, stay strong and play a part in other people's recovery.

I can't describe the feeling I get when others say I have helped them. I get full when my daughter says she is proud of me. And each time, as if on cue, when I get tired, someone needs me and reaffirms my place in life. The simple things now have so much meaning.

I used to be selfish. Someone told me that if I found the joy in giving and being in service then I would find peace. I did, and they were so right. Even with all of life's difficulties, I am still blessed because each day I now rise with a clear conscience, and a clear purpose, and most of all—a smile on my face.

*G.O.G.*

# Expressions in Recovery

Talent, ability, truth, and the beauty of expression reside in every facet of life. The human condition - be it good or bad has always been shown through mediums such as art, writing, singing and speaking.

The following pieces exhibit the innermost thoughts of those who wish to share their heartfelt thoughts and feelings.

## Still here

*I played a game with mind and body  
I refused to listen-  
wouldn't talk to nobody  
My body was wracked  
And I was going insane  
The problems were stacked  
I couldn't live with the pain  
Then an angel appeared  
In human form  
She told me about things  
I'd thought long gone  
She gave me a mirror  
And let me see  
My ways and my errors  
And why I didn't believe  
Now I'm back from the edge  
Of madness and pain  
I never want to stand on that ledge again.  
Each day as I wake  
And go about my day  
I continue to believe  
To help and to pray.  
It's never too late  
To find your way back  
To regain hope  
And get back on track  
To love and to care  
For even more than yourself  
And foolish little me...  
I Thought I had nothing left.*

-Orlando

## Life again

*I can hear what my children  
Actually say, want and need.  
With sober, sane ears  
I can actually see the beauty all around me again  
With clear eyes  
I can enjoy food with friends and family  
Because I taste and appreciate again  
I watch what I say  
And how I say it  
because I care, and I'm concerned  
with more than myself.  
The God of my understanding  
talks to me because he knows  
I now listen and do his will.  
I'm blessed.  
I can see others who've found  
This path and showed me  
Where to look, and what to do.  
I'm grateful.  
And then my heart swells because I know It's only just be-  
gun...life again.*

-Karen Simms



## Just Thinking

At some point it becomes our responsibility to take the initiative, get honest with ourselves and seek the help that we may need. This initiative can be as simple as grabbing that turning point—that moment.

Realistically speaking, it can be very difficult to open up, dig deep and reveal the usually deep-seeded reasons why we experience and do what we do. For each individual it can be as different as night and day. What may have been routine for one, maybe traumatic for another. For ourselves and others, we have to be careful, empathetic and open to new perspectives, views, opinions and tolerances.

The nature of recovery demands that we change and improve not only the physical but the mental and spiritual way we deal with others and ourselves. For some, the

## The Last Word

I remember my moment clearly. It began with self-loathing, embarrassment and shame for who I had become. I developed a profound ability to lie to myself and others.

The thing that fuels my memory now and renews my gratitude is the change. The feeling of waking up with a clear conscious, and going about my day focused and with purpose, clearly and honestly.

I wanted badly to be a man in the true sense of the word. I wanted to be able to tell the truth about who I am, where I've been and where I hoped to go in this life. So many people have also spoken of the freedom after their turning point. There may have been tears, some joyous and some sad, but tears nonetheless, and as we reached these defining turning points and accepted that change was necessary. We were freed.

moment of change began when someone simply and quietly listened.

But, we had to take the initiative to share and purge ourselves of the demons of our past which have held so many of us captive for too long.

Taking the initiative and grabbing the moment builds strength and confidence as we clear our road of obstacles, allowing us to travel forward in this new life.

Will there be more obstacles? Absolutely! Will there be days where we may feel exhausted and want to give up! Possibly.

But the beauty lies in how we accept the challenge of change and how we grab those rare moments of clarity and turning points in our lives. As we grab and utilize these precious turning points, we set examples and leave trails for others to follow on the road to unlimited potential in recovery.

*Anonymous*

We were free to live, strive, plan, implement and dream dreams we previously never thought possible. For some of us, these moments of change were brutal. We may have not seen them as something we were particularly grateful for. But, we shudder to think how lost we might still be if these moments in our lives had not taken place.

For many, their moment has not come. For others, their moment may take them away. Many of us remain to strive to stay strong and live with the hope that our stories will strengthen others as we share on the pages of "Expressions in Recovery".

*Gil Gadson*

*Editor, Expressions in Recovery*



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