



EXPRESSIONS IN RECOVERY

A DIGEST FOR PEOPLE IN RECOVERY DESCRIBING THEIR CURRENT STATE OF MIND, PROGRESS AND FUTURE OUTLOOK



In the middle of the pain, I find a way.
In a pouring rain, it's still a good day
In a snowstorm, I find and see my way
I can choose how I feel and see today.
I can choose

Expressions in Recovery 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)

EDITOR OR GUEST CONTRIBUTOR'S INSPIRATIONAL SUMMARY.



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Many have come and gone in this life that we live. It's been said that it's not about how long you lived, but what you did with that life and how you did it. It's been said that it's about the meaning you find, the people you touch, the things you stood for and the sacrifices you may have made.

Those that are remembered most are usually remembered because of their character, a character that refused to waver in the face of adversity, a person who refused to limit him or herself, a person who chose to believe when others may have not believed in what they could or could not do.

This issue is devoted to courage, commitment, faith and the undying power of the human spirit. Let's go meet some of these soldiers who keep it moving no matter what, right here, on the pages of *Expressions in Recovery*.

Gil Gadson

HERE AND NOW

FEATURED STORIES



Me and MY SON

God always comes first, and one of his gifts is love. Love is my strength.

I was diagnosed with anxiety, major depression and panic disorder. I have a son who was also diagnosed with ADHD.

As you can imagine, our journey has been very difficult.

I love my son, and to help him and myself, my love had to be tough. After some time, my son came to me, he told me he knew I loved him and he agreed to step his game up. My first response to him was "Show me!"

My love still had to be tough and real for us to move forward.

We have been to family therapy, we've had someone that comes to our home, and we've even gone together to a wonderful retreat which brought us even closer. Through therapy, I learned and found different ways to talk, listen and respond. Whatever was necessary, we did with, and because of love.

Today, I don't have the words to describe how happy I am. We have accomplished so much. I work at a place where I can help others as I was helped. My son also attends the program where I work. I see his mind growing and him developing into a fine young man. I believe it was a firm belief that we loved each other that kept us going each and every day.

Juanita Wright

THERE was a time where most of my money went to drugs. I had been in and out of rehabilitation centers four times. While I was in the fourth time, my grandfather died. I was actually talking to him when he had his heart attack. By the time I got to him, he had passed.

Someone recently asked me how I've kept clean and sober since 1990. There were three clear reasons. My first reason is my kids. I didn't want them to do the things that I did. My second was my grandfather. He

loved me. I used to spend summers with him. I just couldn't dishonor him anymore. And then I just got tired of spending all my money hurting myself.

Each day I want to make my grandfather and my kids proud of me and someone they can depend on. My mother is now 85 years old. I try to do as much as I can for her every day.

For me, these things are enough. These are the things that keep me going day after day.

Kevin Steele

I KNOW that only God is my judge. I really take that to heart. So no matter what anyone on this earth says or does, in the final analysis, only God judges me.

Things are hard, I have PTSD, I've been diagnosed as a paranoid schizophrenic, and I have just been told that I have an irregular heartbeat. But no matter what, I keep going because I believe God protects me.

I see myself going to school, taking classes on writing so that I can give back to others the way it was given to me.

My belief is my strength.

Pierre Knox

THERE are things that I do to make myself feel better. I buy myself gifts. If someone does or says something to me or around me that could be upsetting or if I'm feeling down, I go get a pedicure, get my nails done, and put on makeup. I know negative feelings and thoughts can bring you down and, I refuse to let the devil win.

I refuse to listen when he tries to whisper in my ear. When I'm doing the right thing, I feel powerful, I feel in charge of my life and I know I make the devil mad everyday.

Rose Grice

I'VE experienced substance abuse, homelessness and hopelessness. I've experienced my son telling me he wished I was dead. There was a time when I could have never imagined the life I have now.

The work I do now has taken me inside prisons where I met inmates who would never see the light of day but had extraordinary talents and shared their hearts and innermost feelings with me. As an outreach worker, going into the streets, talking to the homeless, I learned some had homes, money and property that we could never imagine and also pain so intense that they found it hard to return to society.

I've learned just how blessed I truly am. I've learned that one of my blessings is being able to help others with co-occurring disorders find their way to a measure of happiness.

At the end of each day, I go home to my wife of 15 years who always supported, loved, pushed and encouraged me. I love her dearly. My son now tells me he loves me very much and is extremely proud of me.

I just lost my mother. Most say they would never know it because of my attitude and how I keep pushing on no matter what. Before my mother died, every conversation we had began with her telling me how much she loved me and how she was so proud of me. Her words ring in my ear and stay in my heart everyday, even though she is no longer here. Her love is still here with me.

This love I've earned, the life I now have, the people God lets me touch is my strength. These blessed thoughts are with me when I rise each and every day, and they are seasoned with gratitude.

Larry Honesty

I try to look at the best of things, even when the outcome of any situation may make things harder. With family problems, arguments, bickering and sometimes just being tired, we often want to give up and not face reality.

But when I think about the possibility of a positive outcome, it gives me the strength to move forward. We have to strive to get better and not give up. I have found a way to always see myself in a better position, and that keeps me going.

Myriam Hernandez

ONE of the things that keeps me going and gets me out of bed each and every day is the fact that the quality of my life is constantly improving.

What I mean by the quality of my life improving is that I've earned more choices, and as I get more choices, I find myself in better positions. Most of us at one time were either not aware or had no choices. I maintain this quality of life by appreciating it, not wanting to lose it and seeing the possibility of even more. I'm now able to appreciate serenity.

Before recovery, I had no idea what peace and quiet was. Now, I walk into my apartment, turn the lights on, I look around at a home that belongs to me, and I thank God. At the end of the day, this peace, this serenity I have allows me to reflect on the day, have gratitude and appreciate the blessings of the day.

Richard Canty

I'm married. I have children, a husband, a home and a job. I supervise others, and also work directly with people with mental health issues.

My days are never boring or predictable. There are any number of unexpected things that may happen differently each and every day.

I was recently told that I was amazing. I was told that I was strong yet loving, patient but firm and also courageous yet fair. This person then asked me how I keep my head up and do what I do at the level that I do it every day. My response was that this isn't just a job to me first of all and very simply—this is intimate.

For me, what I do and how I affect others is intimate and personal. And when something is intimate, it's another level of care. A type of love can enter. This is my strength. I love what I do, really. It's all intimate to me.

Crystal Sanders

EXPRESSIONS IN RECOVERY

Talent, ability, truth and the beauty of expression resides 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. Then following pieces exhibit the innermost thoughts of those who wish to share their heartfelt thoughts and feelings.

HOW WE FEEL

*The road we traveled brought us here and we have traveled far.
We came to heal and face our fears
And this we're doing thus far.
We write to share our heart and hope, and show that hope is real. Our
higher power said to share, so this is how we feel.*



Morning Love

I rise in the morning
Wanting to get up-
Gazing out my window
with a full cup.

I look to the window and trees
For the birds I now know
I see children going to school
and life below

The newsstand man is now my friend
The mailman takes mail I now have to send.
My neighbor says hi with a wave of his hand
As I hear the loud calls of the fish-truck man.

So much life
That I never could see
I never knew this kind of vision
resided in me.

I love the morning.
The beginning of my day
Another adventure
'cause I chose to see it that way.
It's my morning love.

G. Blue

God Loves Me

Lost, empty, confused and asking life—what's the reason?
He shows me the sun, moon, stars, mountains,
oceans and his marvelous nature in due seasons.
When I feel unwanted, unworthy and unloved—for no reason,
He assures me of a plan for my life as long as I'm breathing.
When I feel weary, weak and alone, he reminds me who's in control, to fight the good fight and reminds me that this world is not my home.
When I'm sidetracked by temptation and worldly things we chase.
He reminds me—acknowledge him and he shall

make my path straight.

When I ponder on my years and how he kept me safe.

One thing truly amazing is his never ending grace.
So even when this road gets tough and things may not come easy, one thing I know for sure, my love will never leave me.

Dustin Baker

You Are Not Alone

When all seems ended
When all seems lost
When the pain we've had
Seems to have outlived the cost
When our head is heavy,
and it's held in our hands.
When we choose to sit when we should stand.

Come stand with me
I'll be your friend
Together we'll walk, together we'll send
the pain away
and all the doubt
we'll choose to believe
that there's a way out.
And we'll walk this path
like we've never walked before,
and when we get tired,
we'll walk some more.
Someone walked with me,
like I'll walk with you
now lift that head up
'cause you know we ain't through
You are not alone.

Orlando

I Ain't Got No Choice

It ain't that complicated
We ain't gotta' beat it up
The life I lived is for suckers
And my time was almost up
I had to change my life
And change the way that I see.
all the things that were bad, useless and
very painful for me.

I wanted to live and smile
And see what others see
I wanted to have faith
And learn to love and believe.
So I got real
I found courage and a voice
And I realized I had to move forward
And, I ain't got no choice.

Khalil Storm

I'm still here

They've locked me up before
and thrown away the key.
They've beat me down before
and told me who I couldn't be.
They've left me alone
with no one but myself
and they've asked for more
when I thought I had nothing left
until finally I stood up
not knowing I could stand
I demanded respect
and became a man.
I took deep breaths
Of God-given air
And demanded that
life be loving,
and that life would treat me fair.
I stand on this,
now this is my way
I pray about this—each and every day
I thank God for life, I used to think it was hard
When all I had to do, was do my job with God.

G-Man



THE LAST WORDS:

Dedicated to Alfred Turner Jr.

This issue included examples of how the power of the human spirit can carry us through life's challenges. Stories highlighted the importance of character, and touching the lives of others in positive ways.

Alfred Turner Jr. was a man of character and integrity. I will always remember him for having a positive influence on my life, and many others. Al died on June 14, 2012 after a brief illness. I remember our final conversation before he was admitted to the hospital for a medical procedure, he said, "Gary, I'm going to glory." I think he knew he was destined for a higher calling. I wish we had talked longer.

Al was the award-winning graphic artist who conceptualized the original layout and design for this publication. I had the pleasure of working with him on issues one through six. He had a flair for marrying written text with just the right pictures and graphics. He captured the true essence of written words through visual representation.

More importantly, Al was a man of honor. He was dedicated to his wife, Natalie; his church; and his community. Al was an active member of the Bible Way Baptist Church. Al and Natalie traveled to Guatemala as missionaries. Not only, did they spread the word of their faith, they also helped build facilities for people in need.

I can remember sitting at his kitchen table editing an upcoming issue of Expressions in Recovery while he barbecued for his annual community block party. I will always remember him for making many sacrifices to help others.

Here's to you Al!

With Love,
Gary L. Brown, Executive Editor
Expressions In Recovery

I remember Al, Gary Brown and myself sitting at his dining table, eating chicken wings, having a good time and amidst smiles and greasy fingers, still getting work done. I remember being amazed by the work he displayed in his studio.

Al never bragged, he was unbelievably gracious and kind. He would always listen patiently to someone's ideas before offering his opinion. His smile spoke volumes about where we were at and if we had reached our objectives.

I will miss Al, as I'm sure so many others will, but we still have his wife, Natalie and a wealth of Al's work to remember his artistry, his essence and his heart.

Love Ya' Al...and I'll miss ya'.
Gil Gadson, Editor
Expressions In Recovery



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IN RECOVERY