

CRYSTAL Clear

CAREERS IN SOBRIETY

Winter 2010
NYCMA
NEW YORK CRYSTAL METH ANONYMOUS INTERGROUP

PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER

by Bob B.

IT WASN'T UNTIL I got sober that I realized crystal meth had affected every part of my life, including my career.

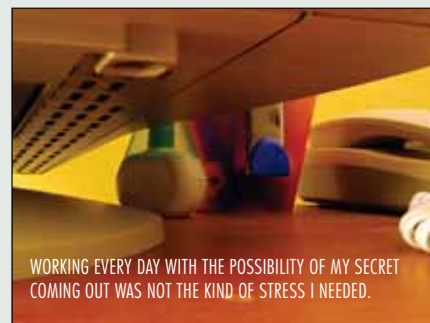
At the height of my career as a bond trader, I resigned. I rationalized my decision on the basis I didn't want to work so hard, the job was too stressful and it was making

me unhappy. In retrospect, the truth was it was getting in the way of my using.

After I got sober, it took years to decide what I wanted to do with my derailed career. I interviewed back on Wall Street, but my heart wasn't in it. I think the primary motivator for people who work on Wall Street is mon-

etary compensation. There are great, honest, hard-working people who work on Wall Street, so I don't mean to imply that there is anything wrong with making a lot of money. For this addict, however, the grandiosity that can come with that puts me further away from my spirit. Wall

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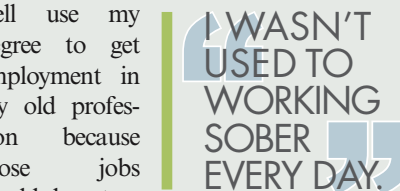
WORKING EVERY DAY WITH THE POSSIBILITY OF MY SECRET COMING OUT WAS NOT THE KIND OF STRESS I NEEDED.

TRUTH IS BEST

By Rick B.

Editor's note: This story shares one fellow's personal experience regarding his felony record and employment. Although it can be very helpful to hear of others' experiences in sobriety, neither this CMA member nor the CMA fellowship can offer advice regarding legal matters. Please consult an expert such as a lawyer or a human resources office if you need guidance on this matter outside the purview of the twelve-step program.

MY FIRST SOBER JOB WAS AS A telemarketer. I had just resolved my court case and was thankfully sentenced to stay in the recovery home where I had made such good progress so far. Since I had a felony, I couldn't very well use my degree to get employment in my old profession because those jobs would do extensive background checks. I was tired of making fabrication upon fabrication to explain away the gaps in my work experience, which I had said were due to deaths and incapacitations in my immediate family but were really due to long periods of getting loaded and not needing to get another job until the unemployment ran out. Anyway, the telemarketing job was "felony friendly" and I wasn't sure that a job that needed a degree was where I wanted to be anyway.



I worked there for a while and put a sign

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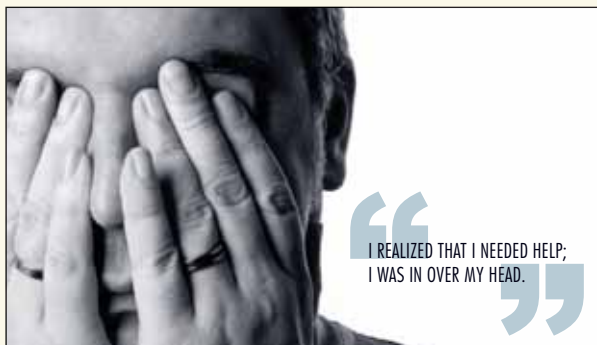
IT WAS MY DECISION

by Tom M.

WHOSE DECISION WAS IT TO USE CRYSTAL METH?

THE LAST TIME I used crystal meth was October 4, 2004. Life as I knew it was in ruins, and I attributed my using to lots of external forces. I had just landed a freelance job at a major magazine, and things seemed to be looking up. A few weeks before beginning to freelance, I had lost a full-time position at another magazine company amid a whirlwind of accusations between myself and a couple of co-workers and a raft of corporate changes. My two relapses during that time didn't help. It was a relief to be working at a new place. Money aside, I was glad to be away from the old job, and at a new place where I felt I was judged solely on my talents. What a relief. I'd only been unemployed for a few weeks.

During my brief time off, I had made a decision that I had to do things differently. My biggest problem, I thought, was that I had been raped months earlier. This "stress" was affecting my relationship with my boyfriend. I didn't want to have sex with him anymore. That



made him angry, and sometimes violent. I needed out of this relationship, first off. Secondly, I realized that I needed help; I was in over my head.

I went to a nonprofit organization that specializes in violence, sexual and otherwise, against gays. I had found it online, and it seemed to be just the thing that could help. I remembered being very nervous when I sat down to talk with someone there. I felt stupid, dirty, ashamed, angry. I would use, I told myself, to cover these emotions, to get through the day. The counselor there was the first person to say that he believed me when I told him about the sexual assault. This made me feel better. He directed me to Crystal

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ABOUT THIS ISSUE

When we were using, our job, if we were lucky enough to have one, was the last thing we worried about. Work was something to be avoided if at all possible. We dreaded it over the weekend and grimly endured it between binges. And if we couldn't keep a job, so what! Offices, bosses, deadlines — that all just got in the way of using any way.

Once we got clean a whole new world began to open up for us. We started making new friendships and rebuilding old ones; we worked the Steps and learned a simple plan for living; we began showing up for people and things. And yes, we learned how to work — “to be a worker among workers,” in the words of *Alcoholics Anonymous* — and to even enjoy doing so.

But even happy, busy little sober bees sometimes run into rainstorms. And so it is for many of us in Crystal Meth Anonymous these days. A storm cloud, the global economic recession, has risen over the horizon, and many of us are out of work or underemployed. *Crystal Clear* thought this would be a good time to look at the whole job question in some depth. After all, the only way through something is through it. So how does a sober person show up for work? Or for that most onerous thing of all: the job search? Marc S. (“*Recovery, Career & the Economic Crisis*”), Rick B. (“*Truth Is Best*”), and Bob B. (“*Putting the Pieces Together*”) share their experience, strength and hope on this difficult topic.

Also in this issue, you'll find the recently revised NYCMA pamphlet, *Alcohol & Other Drugs*, currently available only at nycma.org. Finally, Tom M. shares his story — and his new sober perspective on all the chaos of his using — in “*It Was My Decision*”.

We hope you find *Crystal Clear* engaging as usual, and encourage you to submit your own pieces for future issues! Let us know what you think at newsletter@nycma.org.

ALCOHOL & OTHER DRUGS

The goal of Crystal Meth Anonymous is to help crystal meth addicts lead a life free of active addiction. CMA recommends total abstinence from all drugs, including alcohol, for the following reasons:

Many crystal meth relapses start with alcohol or another drug.

Addicts tend to use any substance addictively, and when we do, we find ourselves with the same problems and maybe some new ones.

We have found our spiritual lives are compromised if we use any mind-altering substances whatsoever. Abstinence works best if we want to live the richest and fullest of lives.

ALCOHOL

Most of us didn't come to CMA because we had a drinking problem. “Alcohol was never an issue for me,” is a commonly heard in meetings. But our experience has shown that drinking alcohol can be a disaster:

“*ABC*” (*Alcohol Becomes Crystal*). We've seen it happen many times. One drink easily leads to two or more, and once a drug addict is under the influence, he or she is much more likely to use. Inhibitions are down. Judgment is impaired. We may feel a little high, but not high enough. We have known addicts to start off with one friendly drink at an office party and end up calling their old drug dealer that same night. Others experiment with “manageable” drinking, sticking to one or two drinks with seemingly no apparent consequences. But that can be a slippery slope. Once we are drinking a little, we are a big step closer to drinking a lot. Once we are drinking a lot—using alcohol to get high—it's not such a big leap to start using crystal meth again.

Substitution. Stories of those who thought they could drink like “normal” people are common in our fellowship. Our experience has shown that crystal meth addicts who drink are inclined to use alcohol addictively. Our goal is to live free of active addiction, not to switch from one substance to another.

Being Around Alcohol. Because alcohol is legal and commonly accepted in many social settings,

we may find ourselves in situations where co-workers, friends or family members pressure us to drink socially. Even if they know we are addicts, they may not understand why we choose not to have wine at dinner or drink a champagne toast at a wedding.

At times, we may want or need to be in a setting where there is alcohol. We can go to nightclubs, parties, and work functions where alcohol is being served. But we must be rigorously honest with ourselves about our motivations for being there, and about our ability to stay sober in a situation where others are drinking. If we feel tempted to drink or triggered to do drugs, we call our sponsor or other fellows, and if necessary, leave the scene.

RECREATIONAL DRUGS

Recreational drugs can lead us back to crystal meth just as alcohol can. Many of us can't imagine why we would not eventually go back to crystal meth—our drug of choice—if we were using drugs anyway. Just as alcohol can become a new addiction, so can any recreational drug. Substituting one drug for another, generating new consequences, finding new flavors of unmanageability, and hitting a new bottom is not the life we want.

PRESCRIBED MEDICATIONS

We are not doctors. Prescriptions are sometimes necessary; being sober does not mean that we compromise our health or suffer needless pain. As sober people we are learning to take care of ourselves. However, we have to be careful about using our health problems as an excuse to compromise our sobriety.

Medically necessary drugs that get us high are dangerous. We tell our doctors we are recovering addicts so they can be more careful about what they prescribe. But even doctors with good intentions may not be versed in addiction—the spiritual side of our condition is not their area of expertise. Besides, some of us were good at manipulating our doctors: A doctor willing to write a prescription and an addict looking for an excuse to get



What if I want to write an article for the newsletter? Contact a member of the NYCMA Literature Committee. You may also send an e-mail to newsletter@nycma.org.

The decision to take some medications is personal and individual. We suggest a spiritual solution first whenever possible. Taking a pill may rob us of the chance to learn and truly alleviate our discomfort. We talk to our doctors, sponsors, and trusted fellows, and try to do the right thing.

Painkillers and anesthesia. “Coming to” after surgery is a precarious time for addicts, especially if we are alone with a bottle of painkillers. We ask others for help, getting our sponsors and experienced sober fellows to monitor our prescriptions. Taking painkillers can impair our judgment, putting us at risk for relapsing or developing a new addiction. We ask ourselves, are we looking for an excuse to get high? Are we really in pain or just impatient and unable to accept that “this too shall pass”?

Psychopharmaceuticals. Rigorous honesty and respect for others is important in this area. We have known people who were bipolar, schizophrenic, or clinically depressed and could not stay sober—or function—without medically necessary drugs. Informed profes-

sional supervision is essential in this arena. For example, some of us were already on antidepressants when we came into CMA. Stopping abruptly can be very dangerous, so we made sure we talked to our doctors.

In early recovery, when we may experience many strong and unfamiliar feelings. Sobriety is a new way of life—we often feel overwhelmed. When we are first getting clean, many of us experience drug-induced depression and paranoia. Some of us suffer from withdrawal. These times are difficult, but they are not necessarily indicators of ongoing mental illness. Meetings, our sponsors, our fellows, prayer, meditation, and Twelve Step literature get many of us through tough emotional times.

We remember that we are not experts in the medical treatment of mental disorders.

OVER-THE-COUNTER DRUGS

Over-the-counter drugs possess risks, especially if they are mind-altering substances. They can get us high—just as alcohol and other drugs can, becoming new problems with new consequences and unmanageability. Many

of us talk to our sponsors honestly about any and all chemicals we take, just to be on the safe side.

CLEAN AND CLEAR

In sobriety, we practice a new way of life without drugs and alcohol. Today, many of us can't imagine any feelings—good or bad—from which we would have to escape by taking a drug. We can tolerate discomfort and want to see what new experiences might be on the other side of it.

In our active addiction, our lives revolved around drugs: looking for drugs, being high, recovering from using, “white knuckling” it to stay clean for short periods. Everything took a back seat to drugs. Clean and sober, working a program of recovery, this is no longer the case. Abstinent and working the Twelve Steps, we have a “spiritual awakening”—a change in our personalities. The obsession to use is lifted. We find a new freedom and a new happiness, a life beyond our wildest dreams. ■

Reprinting of NYCMA pamphlet titled
“Alcohol & Other Drugs”

SAVE THE DATE

It's time to get ready for the
2010 CMA World Conference!

This year's conference will be held

March 4–7, 2010

in New York City at

The Center

208 West 13th Street,
New York, NY, 10011

Registration is open via regular mail or online from now until February 15th, 2010.

For more information visit

www.cmaconference.com

All members of CMA are invited and encouraged to attend so please join us!!

WHAT IS CRYSTAL METH ANONYMOUS? Crystal Meth Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other, so they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from addiction to crystal meth. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using. There are no dues or fees for CMA membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions. CMA is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy; and neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to lead a sober life and to carry the message of recovery to the crystal meth addict who still suffers.
—from the CMA General Service pamphlet titled “What Is Crystal Meth Anonymous?”

RECOVERY, CAREER & THE

When I first offered to write a piece about recovery and the economic crisis, I felt compelled to share how this unusual “life on life’s terms” reality was affecting me and how program would help me weather it. But the eventual outcome would surprise even me. First, a bit of history...

ECONOMIC CRISIS

BY MARC S.

I've been sober in CMA since fall 2002. Much of my early sobriety was dominated not by triggers, but by professional insecurities and nagging underemployment (and, of course, sex). For three years I found myself in

to turn it over, repeatedly, trusting that God had better plans for me (Step 3 – boy did I practice that one).

Though not a moral inventory, aspects of Step 4 can be seen in all the career development work I did, which

process; I had to just let it happen.

THIS TIME

Most importantly from it all, I learned that I would always be taken care of (Step 3 again). So when I learned last fall that my best job to date

I DID MY BEST THROUGH CAREER COUNSELING, THERAPY, AND APPLYING MY PROGRAM TOOLS.

a suite of ill-suited, low-paying jobs and ongoing soul-searching, aggravated by fears of economic insecurity in a very expensive city. I did my best through career counseling, therapy, and applying my program tools. All that helped me get through what proved to be an inevitable period of trial and error for me to recover professionally.

WHAT I DID

Certainly, staying sober was #1, because I understood that without a base of (relative) sanity, nothing else would be possible. So basic actions – like frequent meetings, sponsorship, step work and gobs of fellowship – were essential for staying sober and, I began to realize, for figuring out anything else. I began to see that the very same tools could help me navigate the particulars of life, such as my career search. While I did not sit down and formally work the steps specifically around a professional recovery (though people have done that and I applaud them), I did learn to apply them in the following ways:

Harboring no illusions about my addiction and that unmanageability must somehow extend to my work life, I stayed close to the program (Step 1).

I had faith that the same higher power that got me sober could certainly restore me to professional sanity, and I practiced this faith by praying on it daily (Step 2).

When particular jobs didn't happen – when my faith wavered – I learned

involved taking inventory of my past jobs, decisions, strengths, personality traits and, certainly, fears.

I shared incessantly about all this with my sponsor and with other addicts (Step 5).

Very gradually, the willingness process continued as I begrudgingly let go of character defects and preconceived notions (“my way”) of what my career should be (Steps 6, 7).

Aside from reconnecting with former colleagues and references, my only professional harms were to myself; I had to continually work to replace my professional guilt and insecurities with positive thinking and confidence with each passing success (living amends, Steps 8, 9).

Of course, this process continues to this day (Step 10).

I continue to pray and do written meditations daily (Step 11).

And I certainly have shared my experience with sponsees and in meetings to carry the message that these principles can work in affairs beyond the task of getting sober (Step 12).

This clarity has only come in retrospect. At the time, I felt awash in confusion and fear, but I continued to apply my tools. Over time I realized that although we do have steps and actions to take, recovery has its own course and cannot be manipulated. In other words, all that trial and error I went through was part of my growing

at a Wall Street law firm would be coming to an end due to the financial crisis, I knew that a new and better door must be opening. I still felt all my disappointment at leaving the comfy nest of supportive bosses and colleagues I'd been blessed with, and I shared about that. But I got busy with my resumé, portfolio, and recruiters, and prepared myself for the worst – several months of unemployment during the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. As part of the mental preparation, I got psyched for the time to do volunteer work that would indulge my passions and provide proof points for a happier career choice, and to enjoy the time off for just focusing on myself. I also prayed and affirmed daily: “I have a great job doing what I love to do, with nice people, for great pay.” (I had learned from experience not to get too specific because I may not know what's best for me.)

Ironically, I landed an ideal position immediately, even before my official layoff date. I had been spared another protracted transition. I don't expect this will always be my experience; the point is I was pretty ready to accept whatever happened, to keep taking my actions and keep the faith. My earlier disappointment and job insecurity were quickly replaced by anxiety about the upcoming job change and fear of the unknown – after all, I am an addict! And that's a luxury problem. ●

THE TWELVE STEPS OF CMA

1. We admitted that we were powerless over crystal meth and our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of a God of our understanding.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with a God of our understanding praying only for the knowledge of God's will for us, and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to crystal meth addicts, and to practice these principles in all of our affairs.

DECISION from Page 1

Meth Anonymous meetings. He said that if he was going to be able to help me, I'd have to put down crystal meth. Otherwise, to the cops, "I'd just be a [drug] user."

Initially, I didn't think I would need the meetings, but I checked one out anyway. After all, if I stood up for myself and did something to fix what I believed happened to me, the feelings would disappear. If the feelings disappeared, my using would stop. Several days later, I went to a meeting. The people there seemed really screwed up compared to me, and I left thinking, "Those guys are a mess. I'm not that bad. I can do this on my own. I don't have a problem."

Despite feeling better and pledging not to pick up anymore, I did it again. I used for the weekend and showed up for my new job exhausted, anxious and embarrassed. I had spent most of the weekend shooting up, alone in my bedroom and watching pornographic movies and having phone sex. I felt busted.

This is when I realized that, on top of everything, I probably had a drug problem, too. I started going back to meetings and got a sponsor, started collecting time, worked the Steps with a Step-sponsor, and did lots of service. I was going to stop using crystal meth, so I could exact my revenge on the person who raped me. I had been diagnosed with depression about 15 years earlier, though I never stuck to any treatments for more than eight or nine months because the prescription drugs given by the doctors made it nearly impossible for me to function in bed. As a result, I eventually would stop the treatments, so I could have a better relationship with whomever I was dating at the time.

Several times, this had led to illicit drugs, a

troubled romantic relationship and, eventually, a breakup. On top of that, I was very codependent, and didn't realize it; I often sacrificed my emotional well-being just to be in relationship. I didn't realize how this problem was affecting everything, and everyone, around me.

I had tried Ecstasy right after I had come out, and little did I know I was off to the races. My pattern would become this: clean myself up and do well at a job; meet someone and after a time, party with them or behind their back while I cheated on them; break up with that boyfriend and go back on my meds and clean myself up. (Ecstasy, cocaine, crack and crystal meth are the drugs I have tried. The latter was hard to get, so I didn't do it much, at first. I traded my body and my dignity for each of them, at one time or another.)

Then my pattern changed: My boyfriend at the time broke up with me. I found a regular source for crystal meth and enjoyed being single and, finally, "sexually liberated" because of it.

Then what I thought would be a great job landed in my lap. I took it, put down the drugs, and went back on my depression meds. For quite some time, I did very well there. I had met another guy and our relationship seemed to go well, even though I was high when we met at a sex club. About a year and a half passed. Then a staff change occurred, and the office atmosphere went to hell. Sniping and personal attacks were common. I was in over my head at the job, and often volunteered for projects that only brought trouble for me.

After a while, I went back to using. I missed work a couple of times and partied on the weekends. Then I started injecting crystal meth, and my sense of time and responsibility disappeared. I was in full self-destruction mode, and my only way out, I told myself, was to use crystal meth. Toward the end of my using, I remember hoping that the drugs would just put me out of my misery—permanently.

The sexual assault, I remember, had torn out my soul, and my drug use finished the job by clearing out any remaining vestiges of my old, fun self. Every day was my own little slice of hell. About this time, some videos of myself began surfacing at work. I had no idea I was being filmed by a neighbor I had been partying with; after I confronted him about the possible sexual assault, the nude videos began appearing at my job. The embarrassment was unbearable. Now everyone around me, I felt, knew that I was just a dysfunctional mess. My credibility at work evaporated. I stuck to the job, even

I REMEMBER HOPING THAT THE DRUGS WOULD JUST PUT ME OUT OF MY MISERY PERMANENTLY.

HOW CAN CMA HELP ME WITH MY PROBLEM?

We are not doctors, therapists, or drug counselors. We understand what it's like to be addicted to crystal meth because we are recovering addicts. We know what it's like to keep making hollow promises to stop using crystal meth and to find ourselves breaking our promises again and again. We know what it's like to suffer as a result of our crystal use—our members have suffered financially, socially, romantically, professionally, emotionally, and physically. But by working together with fellow recovering addicts in CMA, we are rebuilding our lives and learning how to stay free from active addiction.

excerpted from the CMA pamphlet "Frequently Asked Questions" available for download at www.nycma.org

though it was clear I was on my way out.

I was on eight or nine medications at that time, including an HIV prophylactic. I was so sick from these drugs, compounding everything. Even though I wasn't 100 percent sure I had been raped, I started taking the meds. Everything was a mess.

Hindsight tells me that losing this job was good for me, even though it didn't feel that way at the time. It pushed me to my first CMA meeting, even though I wouldn't start attending regularly until after my next and, to date, my last relapse.

After five years sober, I can look back on this time in a more matter-of-fact way. That wasn't so at the time. I felt—and acted—like a victim. In some ways, I was. But only time and doing the Steps have helped me see my part in all of this.

Why did I keep going back to my neighbor's, despite suspicions that something had happened to me? He always had free crystal meth.

Why did I spend myself into the ground on porn and phone bills? Crystal meth.

Why did I continue to take part in what I now consider risky sexual behavior with strangers? Crystal meth.

Why was I behind on my bills? Crystal meth.

TRUTH from Page 1

above my telemarketing cubicle that said DFQ. The first letter meant "don't" and the last one meant "quit." I think you can figure out the middle one.

I wasn't used to working sober every day. It was boring not being able to get high. I wasn't used to being myself. I hadn't been myself for many long years and this didn't feel very good. But every drug addict I knew lost a job then found a new one when his back was to the wall. No one ever got a better job while still working. What would be the point of making work a priority when the real priority was to keep smoking the pipe?

Anyway, I didn't quit until I got another job. The new job was at a large home improvement retailer. The process for filling in the application was at a human resources kiosk. The questionnaire asked the inevitable question: "have you ever been convicted of a felony?"

The time in the rooms of recovery had taught me that truth is best, so the best answer for me was to leave the question blank and hope to get a chance to explain myself if I got that far in the hiring process. What I learned years later was that the computer program

Why did I allow people to degrade me during sex? Crystal meth.

Why did I dehumanize others during sex? Crystal meth.

Why didn't people trust me anymore? Crystal meth.

How did I get to such a low point in my life? Crystal meth.

Whose decision was it to use crystal meth? Mine alone. ■

PIECES from Page 1

Street has very little to do with the bigger picture of helping others.

Ideas floated around in my head, but I couldn't seem to figure it out. I mentioned this to a friend and he recommended a career coach. This coach was able to provide me with a road map to find my way through the process. My sponsor and therapist had listened and provided support, but I needed someone to directly address this piece of the puzzle to find any clarity on the career front. I had three ideas: opening a gym, going back to trading, or working in career services at the university I had graduated from.

It was like doing the steps. I couldn't think my way through the steps; they re-

quired action, work and taking pen to paper. This was a very similar process. As I researched each idea it became clear to me that I didn't want to go back to trading – my values had changed. I spoke to two independent gym owners and within minutes I realized it wasn't what I thought. I had romanticized this idea for 20 years, but taking the action to speak with someone who is in the field blew that fantasy away in a flash. I reluctantly went to speak to the dean of my university at the prodding of my coach, and that set in motion a path to becoming a career counselor myself.

Feeling like I am helping people in their career path allows me to build self-esteem. Wall Street felt like it built self-esteem, but many of the rewards were external and ego-driven.

In retrospect, I was in a process and didn't even realize it. I like being sober because I have more inner peace; my new career is an important part of that. To live a clean and sober life, my values have to be aligned in every area of my life. What I have learned is that no matter the situation or the damage from a using history, there is a way out. ■



which allowed me to fill in the questions at the kiosk turned every question not answered to "no."

The employer never found my crime and this didn't turn out to be an issue until I was due to be promoted and the company did another background check and found my felony. There was a long discussion; and I wasn't fired, because I had been such a great employee in the three years leading up to that moment.

Well, now what? I liked the work at the retailer, but the challenge wasn't there and I knew I could lose years of my life and be happy yet unfulfilled (and poor).

By this time, I had successfully petitioned the court to expunge my crime (which by now had been lessened to a misdemeanor). So what was I going to do now?

I was hired in a completely separate industry and have excelled greatly. I've switched jobs

a few times and am at the point where no employer even does a background check because of my work experience and reputation. So now I have no felony and a college degree and haven't needed to prove either so far.

What's the right answer for someone new? I would've hated to be hired at a place and found that I liked it only to be fired several months or years later when it became apparent I lied on my job application. And the thought of working every day with the possibility of my secret coming out was not the kind of stress I needed.

One truth about addicts I've noticed is that the spiritual awakening that comes as a result of the Steps makes us terrific people when we finally "get it." This has been true for me. I just "out-worked" everyone around me, told the truth always and have had a successful and interesting professional life. ■

MEETINGS

THIS LIST IS UPDATED REGULARLY AT NYCMA.ORG

SUNDAY

- 11:30 AM **Sunday Solutions** (c) Lesbian & Gay Community Center
 6:00 PM **Step Meeting**† (o) Lesbian & Gay Community Center
 7:30 PM **Beginner's Basics** (c) Lesbian & Gay Community Center

MONDAY

- 7:45 AM **Good Morning, Higher Power** (c) Gay Men's Health Crisis
 6:00 PM **Relapse Prevention** (o) Lesbian & Gay Community Center
 8:00 PM **NA Book Study** (o) Realization Center
 8:00 PM **59th Street Bridge Back to Life** (c) 2061 32nd Street, Astoria, Queens

TUESDAY

- 7:45 AM **Good Morning, Higher Power** (c) Gay Men's Health Crisis
 12:15 PM **Step-Writing/Discussion Workshop** (c) Roosevelt Hospital
 6:00 PM **Recovering Together** (o) Gay Men's Health Crisis
 7:30 PM **Beginners Meeting**†† (o) Lesbian & Gay Community Center
 8:00 PM **Long-Term Sobriety** (o) Gay Men's Health Crisis

WEDNESDAY

- 7:45 AM **Good Morning, Higher Power** (c) Gay Men's Health Crisis
 7:45 PM **Solutions in Recovery** (c) Lesbian & Gay Community Center
 8:00 PM **Conscious Contact/11th Step** (o) Gay Men's Health Crisis

THURSDAY

- 7:45 AM **Good Morning, Higher Power** (c) Gay Men's Health Crisis
 12:30 PM **Serenity on Tenth** (o) Roosevelt Hospital
 6:30 PM **CMA Agnostics** (c) Gay Men's Health Crisis
 8:00 PM **Big Book Study** (o) Gay Men's Health Crisis

FRIDAY

- 7:45 AM **Good Morning, Higher Power** (c) Gay Men's Health Crisis
 6:15 PM **Living with HIV** (c) Hudson Guild Fulton Center
 8:00 PM **Crystal Clear**†† (o) Gay Men's Health Crisis
 8:30 PM **The O'Toole Meeting** (c) St. Vincent's Medical Center

SATURDAY

- 8:30 AM **Saturday Morning Pair Meeting**††† (c) End of Christopher Street Pier
 11:15 AM **Saturday Solutions**†††† (c) Lesbian & Gay Community Center
 5:00 PM **CMA Promises Meeting** (o) Manhattan Plaza Health Club
 8:00 PM **Meditation Meeting**††††† (c) Lesbian & Gay Community Center
 9:30 PM **Intimacy, Relationships & Sex in Sobriety** (c) Lesbian & Gay Community Center

†The last Sunday of every month is a Traditions meeting. ††Meeting lasts 1½ hours.
 †††Meetings run until end of October. ††††Meeting lasts 1hr 15min. †††††Please try to arrive on time so as not to interrupt the silent meditation portion of the meeting.

ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

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CRYSTAL
Clear

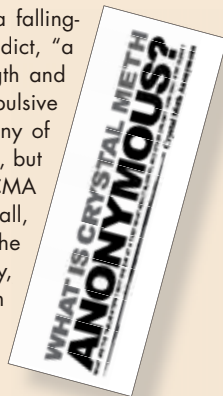
Submissions and Comments: CMA members are encouraged to submit essays and other original nonfiction writing for publication in *Crystal Clear*. Interested parties may contact a member of the NYCMA Literature Committee or NYCMA Intergroup for more information. Inquiries and comments may also be sent to newsletter@nycma.org. By submitting material for publica-

tion, members affirm that it is comprised solely of original content or that references to other works are credited properly. The writer also assumes all liability for any damages that may result from the publication of his or her article. Crystal Meth Anonymous is a Twelve Step fellowship for those with a desire to stop using crystal meth. *Crystal Clear* is published periodically by NYCMA Inc., a not-for-profit corporation located in New York City. NYCMA, or its designee(s), reserves the right to refuse submissions and to edit them, including for clarity and space and to avoid triggering the reader. Submissions become property of NYCMA. No compensation is paid. According to our Tenth Tradition, NYCMA has no opinions on outside issues. Opinions expressed in articles are solely those of the writers and do not speak for NYCMA as a whole. This policy was created by the NYCMA Literature Committee at the request of NYCMA Intergroup members. We also suggest that writers keep in mind our Eleventh Tradition: "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 and all other media." The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of CMA have been adapted with permission from AA World Services Inc. NYCMA is not affiliated with Alcoholics Anonymous. Visual materials are printed with permission.

New York Crystal Meth Anonymous

How is CMA different than other Twelve Step programs? We have found that we relate best to other crystal meth addicts because they understand the darkness, paranoia and compulsions of this particular addiction. The Twelve Steps of CMA were adapted from Alcoholics Anonymous. We do not believe we are better or worse than those in other Twelve Step programs. At the same time, many of us fail to fully identify with "a falling-down drunk" or, in the case of a heroin addict, "a nodding-off junkie." The hyper-extended length and intensity of crystal meth's effects, be it compulsive cleaning or sexual activity, were unique. Many of us have attended other Twelve Step programs, but the feeling of identification in the Rooms of CMA has helped us to keep coming back. After all, who but another meth addict understands the insanity that accompanies the high and, finally, that seemingly bottomless drop into depression that makes us desperate to use still more?

—Excerpted from the new CMA General Service pamphlet titled "What Is Crystal Meth Anonymous?" Copies may be downloaded free of charge at crystalmeth.org.



MEETING DETAILS

- (o) Open Meeting:** Welcomes anyone interested in the CMA program. In addition to regular CMA members, this can include friends and family members seeking information for a loved one, or those curious about the program and not sure it is right for them.
(c) Closed Meeting: Welcomes anyone who has, or thinks he or she might have, a problem with crystal meth.

DIRECTIONS

- **Gay Men's Health Crisis** 119 West 24th Street, between 6th and 7th avenues. Check at front desk for room number.
- **The Hudson Guild Fulton Center** 119 9th Avenue, between 17th & 18th Streets. Check at front desk for room number.
- **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Community Services Center** 208 West 13th Street, between 7th and 8th avenues. Check listings at front desk for room number.
- **Manhattan Plaza Health Club** 482 West 43rd Street, between 9th and 10th Avenues, Conference Room Minnesota 1.
- **St. Vincent's Medical Center** 170 West 12th Street, between 6th and 7th Avenues, 1st Floor Cafeteria
- **Realization Center** 25 East 15th Street, Union Square West, Seventh Floor
- **Roosevelt Hospital** 1000 Tenth Avenue, between 58th and 59th Streets, Room 8-G-41, 8th Floor