



We've all been to that dark, lonely place where we felt like we'd lost everything: jobs, lovers, friends and family, even our minds and souls. Finally realizing we were addicts, we walked into the rooms of CMA. Perhaps it was our first time, or perhaps we were returning after a relapse—either way, we found fellows who understood to embrace and support us as we began our journey in ...

## EARLY RECOVERY.

### A SIMPLE CHOICE

*By Nick F.*

Although I have been coming to Twelve Step meetings since February 2008, I do still consider myself in early recovery. After my last relapse, I am now counting days again and, by the grace of God and the help of the fellowship, celebrated thirty days the Saturday before Memorial Day. I am grateful for having so many second chances in recovery. I have never stopped "coming back." Each time I have had a slip, I have picked myself up and rededicated myself to this program of solutions, a guide to living that transcends my understanding and knowledge.

Early on in my recovery journey, I found a sponsor. I had an interim sponsor when I moved to New York for about a month until I found a permanent one. I heard my current sponsor speak at the Friday beginners' meeting. I wanted the sobriety he had and also could relate a lot to his experiences. His sponsorship is very much rooted in Step work, and that appealed to me as well.

I call my sponsor every day. I actually pick up the phone and call him—I don't text him—so that I get used to the action of reaching out voice-to-voice, person-to-person. I also call at least two other people from the program every day. My cell phone is mostly filled with phone numbers of fellows in the program (e.g. Dan, red hair CMA; Ed, glasses meditation meeting). I also keep business cards with my name and phone number in my wallet so I can easily pass along my info to others after meetings. Staying connected is something that I have struggled with because intimate nonsexual relationships are not my forte. But I have found that they are key to my sobriety.

As far as meetings are concerned, people recommended I do ninety meetings in ninety days. For me, this has helped make meetings part of my daily routine. Going every day also keeps me connected constantly to the program. In keeping with the "living just for today" concept, a day with a meeting is a sober day for me. I go to CMA and AA meetings, and one day hope to make Al-Anon a part of my recovery as well. In AA, I try to go to the same meetings each week in order to get to know the people there. In CMA, the fellowship is smaller, and I find that every CMA meeting is filled with people I know. Find a meeting that you relate to and in which you feel comfortable. Maybe you need a gay meeting? Maybe you need a straight meeting? Maybe you need a meeting with mostly business people on their lunch hour? Most important, find a meeting where the people have the kind of sobriety that you want.

I have been encouraged to share in meetings, to be honest with where I am and also to participate more fully in the group. A bigger lesson for me, though, is listening in meetings. Listening means I am fully present in the meeting and keeping my ears open for suggestions and the experience of others who have stayed sober. For me, listening means being open-minded and willing to try other ways of doing things.

When the meeting chair asks for newcomers to raise their hand and share their day count, I do so. Many times in the past, when I was coming back from a relapse, announcing my day count was the last thing on earth I wanted to do. But it

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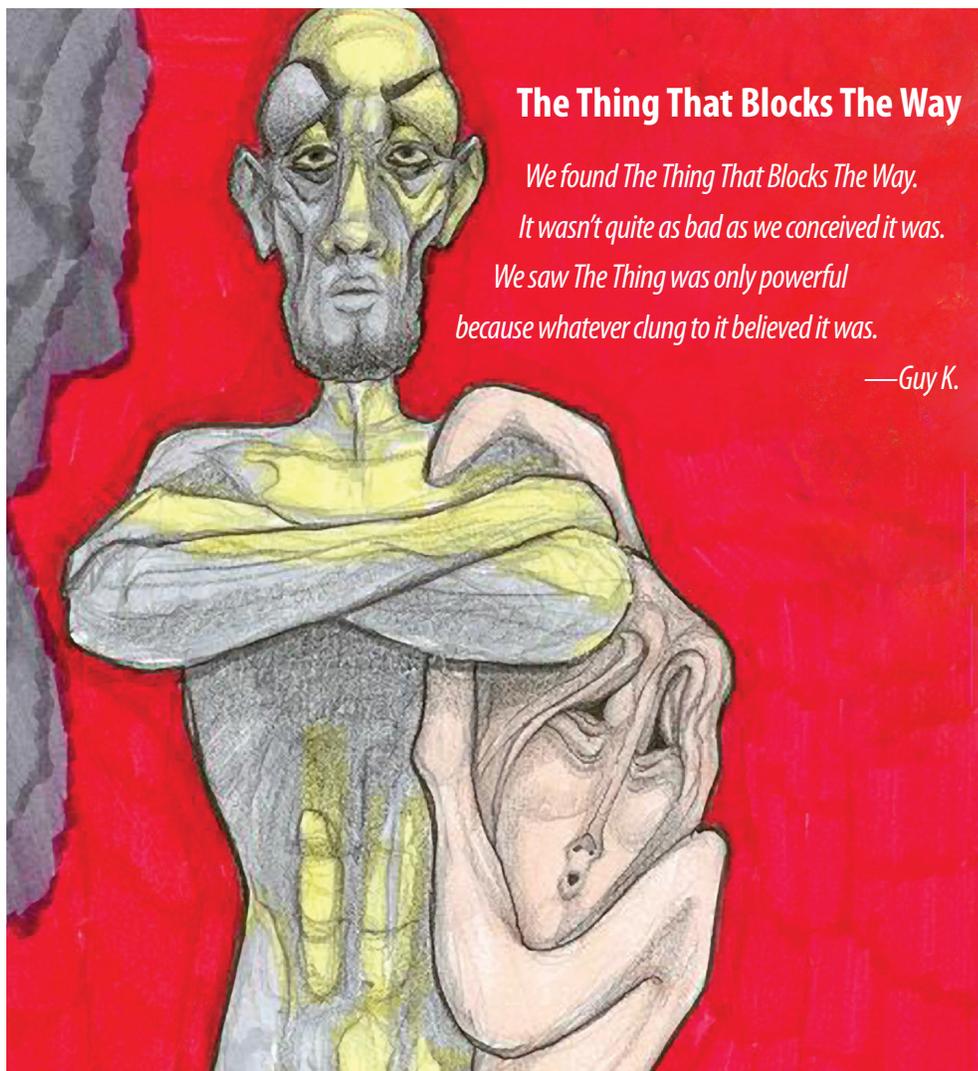
## THE TWELVE STEPS OF CMA

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.

*The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous have been reprinted and adapted with the permission of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. (A.A.W.S.). Permission to reprint and adapt the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous does not mean that Alcoholics Anonymous is affiliated with this program. AA is program of recovery from Alcoholism only—use of AA's Steps and Traditions, or an adapted version of its Steps and Traditions in connection with programs or activities which are patterned after AA, but which address other problems, or in any other non-AA context, does not imply otherwise.*

The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous.

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol, that 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 God as we understood him. 4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. 5. Admitted to ourselves, to God, 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 Him 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 God as we understood him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out. 12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to other alcoholics and to practice these principles in all our affairs.



## The Thing That Blocks The Way

*We found The Thing That Blocks The Way.  
It wasn't quite as bad as we conceived it was.  
We saw The Thing was only powerful  
because whatever clung to it believed it was.*

—Guy K.

## HUGS AND CARING WORDS

Rodrigo S.

I write this on day 8 of my fourth day count. Program hasn't been easy for me, and relapse has been a recurring part of my story. A halting and fragile early sobriety is the only sobriety I have ever known. Nonetheless, I'm grateful that it's survived several self-inflicted blows, despite its fragility.

Addiction has been a very lonely place for me. Feeling unloved, I desperately tried to extract love and approval from others through crystal. Feeling unwanted, I hid behind the drug to feel better. Feeling unhappy, I used sex to try to experience joy. Making matters worse, there was never anyone to share these feelings with, whether they were bad or good.

Learning that I am not alone has been difficult—I don't trust others easily and I often feel "less than." I'm still all too willing to connect temporarily with strangers on drugs rather than run the risk of opening myself up to real friendships and intimacy in sobriety. But with each passing day, I become a little more comfortable with the language of our fellowship. It is a gentle language of love expressed in hugs and caring words.

I think I'm beginning to both accept and receive love. I'm no longer desperately lonely. Sometimes I doubt myself, but I'm surrounded by an understanding fellowship and supported by a sponsor who believes in me. My recovery is only as strong as the hugs I'm willing to accept from others. It grows stronger as my relationships in the program grow stronger. Like my program, I know that these relationships will soon be strong enough to sustain me. ■

## RECOVERY ON A COURT CARD

*Rick B.*

I came into the rooms of recovery on a court card. I couldn't imagine myself getting help from a Twelve Step program. I was happy to be out of the drug life and in a safe place, though. People in the program told me to get a sponsor and work the Steps from my first moment there, but I was happy just to hang around all the people who had come through it and seemed so fulfilled and spiritually centered.

The atmosphere was engaging, and the people were open-hearted and kind, but there wasn't any immediate need for me to get busy on the work. I coasted. I didn't start Step One for three months.

The sayings and phrases were nearly the first thing I saw in the rooms of recovery, and they made an impression with me. Things like "Don't pick up no matter what," and "Bury my pride before my pride buries me." All very good advice, I

thought. I never once mistook this wise advice as a replacement for working the Steps, but it helped me early on before I got a sponsor and worked the program.

When I was new, I didn't understand that the spiritual solution talked about in meetings (because I hadn't yet opened the Big Book) was to be the roadmap for my successful recovery. I didn't have a spiritual background and really had to work to form an idea of my Higher Power. I did hear (in meetings) that most people developed a slow, gradual relationship with their Higher Power.

I was lucky that I listened to the directions from my fellows. They told me not to hang out with my old using buddies. They said if I went to the barbershop enough times, I could eventually get a haircut. The metaphor seemed silly, but I got the point.

They also said to "stick with the winners." I remember I went to a recovery convention with marathon meetings and a banquet dinner where there was a sobriety countdown of several thousand people. It was awesome, and it made me want to start Step work. I think the most important thing was that the people who went were people who were actively living the Twelve Step life. I wanted to be around them—they seemed to be the winners I was told to hang around with. I wanted part of that life. Attraction, and not promotion, I guess.

I soon began my Step work in earnest and found that I had a very good grasp of Step One. I knew I was powerless over speed. I knew I hadn't had any life answers before I entered the rooms of recovery with a court card. I didn't start the work first thing because I was just happy to exist with the dogs of addiction at bay. The sayings on the wall, the information I got from meetings, and the fellowship's advice to me was all I had for my first few months and I sure am glad they were there. ■

## RESISTANCE IS FUTILE

*Andrew C.*

In early sobriety, we are gently reminded that dating and new relationships may not be the best idea. Personally I agree, but the need for intimacy is powerful. Loneliness is why I started using and later, what motivated me to stop. I hope Intimacy will play a big role in what is to become what I call my "big life." As I discovered in early sobriety, without any lasting connections, our lives would eventually become meaningless.

At one point early on in sobriety, I looked down at my phone. With the exception of a call from my dad, my phone hadn't rung in about month. I suddenly became painfully aware that I hadn't been out of the

house socially in six months. With all my friends gone, along with my ability to cultivate any kind of new relationship, I felt doomed. Those first months of sobriety were probably the worst of my life, and a brutal relapse ensued. I found myself totally comfortable with the idea that I was no longer a man but an "it" that required only the drug to survive. That constant struggle of picking up and putting down, of using and recovering, was finally gone and it felt good. After a long interview process I had finally found my new captain. Her demands and increasing salary could be unreasonable, but her happiness became paramount over mine.

For most of my adult life I have internalized my emotions, always afraid of people's reactions. Whenever I tried to open

up, it usually fell upon deaf or at least very confused ears. From early on, I learned how to use sympathy to control an uncomfortable situation and eventually get what I wanted. I have an amazing addiction psychiatrist who said it best: "You, unknowingly, have a way of making people feel sorry for you so they'll do your bidding," or something along those lines. Living in my head and not knowing how to form real relationships left me with fabricated feelings and friendships. My only need was to not be alone, and eventually that need became crippling. My mind-set was to keep my prisoners happy no matter the cost. This not only went for people I was dating but for friends as well. Once my ulterior motives became evident to my captives, they began to plan an exit strategy.

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**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 "What Is Crystal Meth Anonymous?"



# REALITY UNSCRIPTED

By Jake A.

**IT** seems like every television drama or movie story line claims to be based on true events, but the characters portrayed are not about actual people. That, of course, is purely coincidental. How could anyone experience such tragedy like about that patient (played by a one-episode-wonder actor) whose family was just murdered, and who was now being wheeled into the emergency room on a gurney bleeding from every orifice? How many times did ER begin with the aforementioned scenario? Within the first few minutes of the opening scene, the camera would shift to the perspective of the patient from the hospital bed or operating table. Surrounded by doctors and loved ones, we were drawn into the scene, hearing echoing sounds of people asking the patient if they knew where they were or who they were. Blurry visions of heads and hospital machines swirled around the patient until suddenly the image on the television screen faded to black.

Well, sometimes that kind of thing does happen to an actual person. Me. September 14, 2008. The day I died. Twice. And I wasn't vying for an Emmy for special guest appearance in a drama. This was really happening. No actors. No script. Just me in what I thought was my final act.

I had been a good student. I attended Catholic school through my high school years and was always on the honor roll. I was involved in everything I could find, except for sports. I was never an athlete but associated with just about everyone in my class regardless of their social status or what table they sat at in the cafeteria for lunch period.

**C**ollege was different from high school. Attending a want-to-be Ivy League university on the east coast triggered emotions and aspirations unlike anything I had experienced before. My peers were cut from a different mold than me. They hadn't grown up on a side street of duplex row homes. They hadn't climbed trees and

invented games involving imaginary ghosts and flashlights. They'd played lacrosse at summer camp and rode in their uncle's boat on the weekends. They had bottomless expense accounts and fake IDs they used after the liquor their parents moved into their dorm rooms ran out. They were immune to sincere friendships and had résumés that trumped mine ten times over. They were not on need-based scholarships. Their social status was evident in the amount and size of the J.Crew catalog packages that were delivered to the campus mail room weekly. They had already memorized every Pearl Jam, Nirvana and Marky Mark song before they even set foot on fraternity hill.

I gradually found my niche in college. I joined the crew team after seeing a flyer that said "No rowing experience necessary." I pledged a fraternity and became an officer. My social status got an upgrade because I stepped up my game. My mantra became "Do one thing every day that scares you." So I put myself in uncomfortable positions and sometimes in harm's way for the sake of acceptance and the ultimate sense of belonging. I succeeded, almost at the expense of my college academic career. I majored in extracurricular activities and almost flunked out of school. But I made my mark in being somebody I was not.

In my twenties, I drank to excess through graduate school and my first few jobs as an alcohol/drug counselor and advisor. I associated with the glitterati and owned the spotlight, or so I thought, while living in the South in my early thirties. I landed in the inner circle of the gay community; every weekend revolved around cocktail parties where I was introduced to cocaine, ecstasy, ketamine, crystal meth, and a plethora of other club drugs. Guests at these "see-and-be-seen" events (disguised as casual preparties before the club) brought the drugs and I brought the energy and sports drinks (for those who preferred them as a mixer for their pills or other drugs of choice), bottled water, and ice. I quickly learned two things about the single gay scene: Eating did not happen at parties, and drinking in excess

was the norm as long as you had other drugs to make you seem somewhat composed for a long night. Basically, anyone who subscribed to this policy in any social situation was so obliterated that it didn't matter what transpired. I always ended up being the one watching the sun come up on a back porch, sketched out, yelling at birds that seemed to be on a loudspeaker just to annoy me.

The fun hit the road for me as I immersed myself in the circuit party scene, spending thousands of dollars I had borrowed on loan and maxing my credit cards. Being told that I needed to stop eating and start working out three months in advance for such events was insulting at first. But the reality of the vain gay community I had embraced took over, and I conceded to the diet plan spelled out by my seasoned circuit friends.

Unfortunately, I don't believe I ever hit my rock bottom, even though that Sunday afternoon in September I was rushed to the hospital unconscious from accidentally "overdoing it." No—I still had almost three years to go. The next summer I decided to move back to my hometown; that was when my slow descent into darkness began. Although the motivation to move home was family health and a new job opportunity, I lost my job for reasons I still do not understand and found myself gravitating to people who had access to what I wanted and eventually needed. Crystal meth was not my drug of choice in the beginning, but I found it to be the most addictive. It was at the root of how I lost control of my life.

I looked fine—except for the extreme weight loss, sores on my head, bad skin, and mild tremors. For some reason, which I now realize was a moment of clarity and the first hint of my Higher Power, when I entered the counselor's office to complete paperwork, I signed an agreement giving full access to my records to my sister. Deep down, I knew I had a serious problem and I wanted help, but I could not get those words past my lips. I was crying and dying inside.

Although my motivation to seek help was prompted by family, I am committed to my own recovery because I want so badly to be present in the "here and now" and to live my life to my fullest potential. Nothing else matters, and my recovery always comes first. It has been such a relief to work toward achievable goals and to be solution-oriented in a healthy way.

I now have therapy appointments twice a week, and I've been working in a group therapy session for men in early recovery. In my first 90 days, I attended over a hundred AA and CMA meetings and got a temporary sponsor. Initially, I found solace in the fellowship of AA and kept some distance from CMA; however, I quickly realized in the rooms of AA that many people were also cross-addicted and belonged to multiple fellowships that spoke to their specific needs. I returned to CMA meetings and took on service commitments. I changed sponsors—my first was not a good match: Our stories were too similar and I wanted a different perspective. I have worked on a recovery matrix to be aware of all positive recovery behaviors and actions. Currently,

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**“I wasn't vying for an Emmy for special guest appearance in a drama. This was really happening.”**

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Even though I was living at home, I became distant from my family and reclusive whenever I was coming down, which was not often since my occasional use became a daily habit that kept me in old apartments and hotel rooms with strangers for days on end. I came home only to shower and sleep a few hours, ignoring any questions from family and lashing out if any fingers were pointed at me out of concern. My usual happy-go-lucky personality had been extinguished by smoke and mirrors, literally.

A family intervention in August 2011 happened at my parents' house when I was drunk and high. The ultimatum of being excommunicated from my nephew and future niece and a glaring reflection of how sickly, irritable and cruel I had become was unavoidable. I agreed to a therapy assessment, thinking I could manipulate the counselor into seeing my perspective and agreeing that I had things under control. After all, I was charming, educated, and

I attend at least one meeting a day, and when I miss a day, I double up on another day. I am learning to call my sponsor a few times each week, even if it's just to check in and say hello and talk about my day. Verbalizing my thoughts keeps me centered.

I meditate and have moments of silence where I am trying to better understand who or what my Higher Power is. I definitely believe in a Power greater than me—I know I would not be alive today if someone or something had not intervened in that hospital. Today, my relationship with my family and the new friendships I'm building within the program are strengthening, and I am seeing things more clearly and learning about myself, my limits, and my potential. I am hopeful for the future and, although it is a one-day-at-a-time program, I know I can be happy and free for good if I work the Steps and actively participate in my own recovery. It works, if you work it. ■

## JUST KEEP COMING BACK

Danny C.

Early recovery has been a tumultuous experience thus far. Each day has been one of adjusting to new behaviors and habits while letting go of my so-called solution, the drug that got me in this mess in the first place. Being 25 years old probably has not made this any easier. Perhaps for the average 25-year-old, the word *recovery* implies Sunday brunch with friends discussing Saturday night's adventures over mimosas and Bloody Marys. But for me, it involves relieving myself of six and a half years of self-destructive behavior fueled by my crystal meth use. Recovery so far feels like recuperating from a really, really long hangover. Like a hangover, it's uncomfortable, annoying, and I just want to sleep it off. However, even the worst of hangovers eventually pass. As I've heard countless times: "This too shall pass."

While on the topic of slogans, they definitely begin to stick at some point during early recovery. To me, the most meaningful of these has been "keep coming back." Nothing has been more encouraging than this gem of good advice. I heard it when I was having a bad day, when recovery seemed nearly unbearable. I heard it when I was being crazy and was stuck in my head. I heard it when I was straight up being irrational. Most important, I heard it after I relapsed and the shame kept building up inside me.

Relapse has been a part of my recovery and I'm not ashamed of that anymore. It is my journey. My slips have helped me figure out what doesn't work for me. Although I most definitely don't recommend a "trial and error" approach to figuring out tools of recovery, if it happens, don't beat yourself up! Each individual that enters these rooms has a story, each one unique, yet we all share a common thread: We want to get better. And like all of these same individuals, I am not perfect. Say that to yourself. "I am not perfect." Makes you feel a little better

doesn't it? Try this one: "Progress not perfection." Progress comes with each story of experience, strength, and hope I am privileged to listen to at a meeting; absorbing each one, I will learn how to stay sober.

One of the tools I have learned in early recovery is honesty. After what seems like a lifetime of lying to cover up my using and avoiding life in general, honesty has become an integral part of my recovery. My program requires me to open up, to allow myself to be vulnerable in order to change. I have to be able to be broken down to build myself back up. But like everything else my program requires me to do, being honest and vulnerable makes me uncomfortable. But it's working through these uncomfortable feelings that allows me to grow as a person; it is through that growth that I will reclaim what I once gave up—myself.

And now for the early recovery guarantees...there are none! I cannot guarantee that this process will be speedy. You know how we need to know how long something is going to take so that we feel better and not as tense about it? Well, I hate to break it to you, but it's gonna suck to be you for a while. I guess there is no real timeframe that constitutes early recovery. What I can guarantee from my own experience so far is that it will change you, that is, if you are willing to let the change happen. It will allow you to see this thing called sobriety is attainable and that those who have it want you to have it too! You just have to be ready and willing to receive it. It may not happen after your first meeting, and if you still feel skeptical after that first meeting, just keep coming back. As I heard a fellow share in a meeting, "Change will only come when the pain of staying the same is greater than the pain of change." I have lived in pain for so many years, now I've chosen to change. Today, I choose to come back. ■

### RESISTANCE IS FUTILE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

The only way they stood a chance was if I grew tired of them first. If not, that once generous and caring man would turn on them in some very desperate ways. This roller coaster became exhausting; eventually, it closed me off from any form of long-lasting sexual relationship.

Before drugs, I avoided sex because it made me uncomfortable, and it still reminds me of a very bad time in my life. I think one reason I craved social intimacy so much in early sobriety was that in my fleeting sexual bonds I had never found true connection. Meeting new people in an unpredictable environment has never been my strong suit, but now, instead of hiding from people, I seek them out. I owe this profound change to all of the people I encounter every day in meetings—and maybe even to my Higher Power. (God was my first real break-up, and once I walked away I never looked back. That is, until now. My lack of contact with a Higher Power allowed me to do unspeakable things with complete abandon.)

I repeat my new recovery mantra, "The enemy of my enemy is my friend," over and over. That saying has been used on the battlefield, and it fits perfectly for me. My real enemy, after all, is a lack of connection. I need to declare war on this addiction. My best ally, scary as it can be, is real intimacy with others. ■

**Share-a-Day  
is coming!**

**Save the date:  
Saturday,  
October 6, 2012**

# DON'Ts & DOs

What follows are my don'ts and dos: the simple actions which have allowed me to stay sober a day at a time. —Jeff S.

Forget the last time I used.	Forgive myself for it. When I know better, I do better.
Try to do too much at one time.	Focus on the addiction that is going to kill me the fastest.
Overdo it with service.	Give myself time to just be.
Delay doing my Step work because I want to do it perfectly.	My Step work to the best of my ability today.
Compare my clean time to theirs.	Be grateful that I am sober today.
Go to the rooms in search of a boyfriend.	Develop a support system of fellows and friends that I cherish.
Focus on someone else's program.	Focus on my own program.
Choose a sponsor that I really want to date (or use with). He could become my dealer someday!	Choose a sponsor who has what I want (sobriety), and wants the same for me.
Allow the personalities in the rooms to chase me away.	Learn to accept people where they are on their journey.
Expect to be spoken to and welcomed.	Introduce myself and welcome others.
Wait to incorporate prayer and meditation into my daily practice.	Be still and know that I am not alone.
Relapse. The first time is a gift.	Come back if I do!
Let an imperfect program stop me.	Stay sober...just for today.
Push myself to the point of exhaustion in recovery.	Rest and allow myself time to heal.
Allow myself to isolate.	Know that it's okay to have downtime on my own.
Focus on perfection	Focus on balance.
Rush.	Allow the solution to wash over me.
Participate in thirteenth-stepping.	Respect myself and others by honoring our Traditions.
Criticize the speaker, the chairs, the space, the lighting, the temperature, etc.	Be grateful that this program exists and that we have a place to meet.
Criticize the literature.	Read it with an eye for the message it provides.
Relapse. (Did I mention that?) And if I do, don't use with other members of the fellowship. It's not pretty.	Stay.
Allow anything to justify using.	Ask for help.
Just "try" to ask for help.	ASK FOR HELP! Know that this helps someone else stay sober, too.
Try to save my face and my ass at the same time.	Let the rooms love me until I can love myself.
Forget where using takes me.	Be grateful that we don't have to die from this disease...one day at a time.
Concentrate on the problem.	Live in the solution.

## A SIMPLE CHOICE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

reminds me where I am with my sobriety. Counting days out loud is a form of acceptance of that reality. Also, it alerts others—who may be able to help me—that I am counting days.

I write a gratitude list in a journal before bed every night. This reminds me of the things I have to be grateful for from that day and takes my mind away from concentrating on what I do not have in my life. I enjoy looking back at the days gone by; it quickly gives me a sense of how rich my sober life is becoming. Recently, my sponsor and a few other fellows started a morning gratitude email. I find it a very intimate experience. It's inspiring to hear about others' daily blessings, the fruits of their sobriety. And the gratitude emails keep coming all day, so I get reminders throughout the day of how the promises of the program actually come true.

I have been told that the three cornerstones of a healthy approach to sobriety are honesty, open-mindedness, and willingness. I've spoken about the first two. As for willingness: I am willing to do my Step work on a continuous basis. I am currently on Step Seven, where I am committing myself to a deeper and more intimate relationship with my Higher Power. Humility for me is becoming a way of living. I am teachable, grounded by the reality that I am an addict who has a daily reprieve from my sickness. If I pursue my sobriety as hard as I pursued my addiction, then I have faith that I will continue to stay sober, one day at a time.

None of these tools means anything if I don't put them to use. Thank God I have a choice today: to either suffer through the life I was living or to use the toolkit the program has given me to live again. It's that simple. ■

### WANT TO WRITE FOR US?

Contact a member of the  
NYCMA Literature Committee or  
email [newsletter@nycma.org](mailto:newsletter@nycma.org).

**MEETINGS** THIS LIST IS UPDATED REGULARLY AT NYCMA.ORG

**SUNDAY**

- 11:15 AM **Sunday Solutions (c)** The LGBT Center
- 6:00 PM **Step Meeting† (o)** The LGBT Center
- 7:30 PM **Beginner's Basics (c)** The LGBT Center

**MONDAY**

- 7:45 AM **Good Morning, Higher Power (c)** GMHC
- 6:00 PM **Relapse Prevention (o)** The LGBT Center
- 8:00 PM **NA Book Study (o)** Realization Center
- 8:00 PM **59th Street Bridge Back to Life (c)** 30-80 21st St, Apt 4A, Astoria
- 8:00 PM **CT #1 Beginners (o)** St. Paul's on the Green, Norwalk, CT

**TUESDAY**

- 7:45 AM **Good Morning, Higher Power (c)** GMHC
- 6:00 PM **Recovering Together (o)** GMHC
- 7:30 PM **Beginners Meeting†† (o)** The LGBT Center
- 8:15 PM **Long-Term Sobriety (c)** GMHC

**WEDNESDAY**

- 7:45 AM **Good Morning, Higher Power (c)** GMHC
- 12:30 PM **Beginner's Mid-day Midtown (o)** Roosevelt Hospital
- 6:30 PM **Harlem Renaissance (c)** Harlem United CAC
- 7:45 PM **Solutions in Recovery (c)** The LGBT Center
- 8:00 PM **Conscious Contact (o)** The LGBT Center

**THURSDAY**

- 7:45 AM **Good Morning, Higher Power (c)** GMHC
- 6:30 PM **CMA Agnostics (c)** GMHC
- 7:30 PM **It Works! (c)** Golden Hill United Methodist Church Library, Bridgeport, CT
- 8:00 PM **Big Book Study (o)** The LGBT Center

**FRIDAY**

- 7:45 AM **Good Morning, Higher Power (c)** GMHC
- 6:15 PM **Living With HIV (c)** Hudson Guild Fulton Center
- 7:30 PM **Crystal Clear†† (o)** The LGBT Center
- 8:30 PM **Friday French Church (c)** The French Church

**SATURDAY**

- 11:15 AM **Saturday Solutions†††† (c)** The LGBT Center
- 5:00 PM **CMA Promises Meeting (o)** St. Mary's Church
- 8:00 PM **Meditation Meeting††††† (c)** The LGBT Center
- 9:30 PM **Intimacy, Relationships & Sex in Sobriety (c)** The LGBT Center

**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 if it is right for them. (c) **Closed meeting:** Welcomes anyone who has, or thinks he or she might have, a problem with crystal meth. †The last Sunday of every month is a Traditions meeting. ††Meeting lasts 1½ hours. †††Meeting lasts 1hr 15min. ††††Please try to arrive on time so as not to interrupt the silent-meditation portion of the meeting.

**DIRECTIONS**

- **The French Church** 128 W. 16th St., Ground Floor
- **GMHC** 446 W. 33rd St., btw 9th & 10th Aves. GMHC pass or photo ID required to enter.
- **Golden Hill United Methodist Church Library** 210 Elm St., Bridgeport, CT 06604
- **Harlem United CAC** 290 Lenox Ave., btw 124th & 125th Sts. Lower Level.
- **Hudson Guild Fulton Center** 119 9th Ave., btw 17th & 18th Sts.
- **The LGBT Center** 208 W. 13th St., btw 7th & 8th Aves. Check lobby for room info.
- **Realization Center** 25 E. 15th St., 7th Floor
- **Roosevelt Hospital** 1000 10th Ave., btw 58th & 59th Sts., Room 8-649
- **St. Mary's Church** 133 W. 46th St., btw 6th & 7th Aves.
- **St. Paul's on the Green** 60 East Ave., Norwalk, CT 06851
- **30-80 21st St., 4A** btw 31st Ave. & 30th Dr., Astoria, NY, N/Q train to Broadway, Astoria

**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](http://crystalmeth.org).



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