

THE INTIMACY ISSUE



ABLE TO CONNECT

André W.

Intimacy was a word I didn't use much when I came to the program eight years ago. But as I've stayed sober, I have realized it's one of the things I'd been searching for since I came to my first meeting. My first sponsor told me I could do anything I used to do using—I just couldn't use. If I wanted to be a sober "whore," as he called it, I could. That's what I did: I slept with many, many people. It worked for me for a while. Then I realized I was still having sex with no emotional connection, and that no longer worked for me.

What I learned by starting the Steps was that my sobriety was an inside job; so finding true intimacy had to begin inside me as well (no pun intended). I had to start by finding love for myself and my body at a healthy weight. I'm 5 foot 10 and weighed between 135 and 140 pounds when I came in, and I thought I looked amazing. I was mistaken.

I started to put on weight in sobriety. I did my Fourth and Fifth Steps and decided to avail myself of the tools in and out of the rooms to help me fall in love with myself and my body. Over the next few years, I took body-acceptance seminars, culminating in a retreat where I got to run naked through the woods, beat on a drum, and find my spirit—all with my belly hanging out.

I was finally able to connect with others without worrying strictly about the physical. I found myself looking into the eyes of the person I was with. I didn't worry so much about performance. I still didn't know if I wanted a monogamous relationship, so I tried an open one. I found it didn't work for me. I'm now in a monogamous relationship and will be getting married in the spring. Coming into the program and working it and letting it work for me has helped me not only survive in sobriety, but at times thrive. ■

THE POWER OF GOOD-BYE

Jeff S.

Editors' Note: We believe true intimacy eludes us as long as we remain obsessed with getting high. You may have heard someone say in a meeting that crystal was "the love of his life." Many addicts felt this way about drugs before they found recovery. We had an un-love affair—and eventually we had to say good-bye.

This is a "Good-bye Letter to Addiction" I wrote on July 8, 2010, while I was at an in-patient rehab. I remember reading this out loud in my small group and the relief I felt when I was done. If you've never taken the opportunity to write this kind of good-bye, I encourage you to do so. Writing things out helps me to process through grief and loss...and to move on.

Dear Crystal—

There's three of you that I need to say good-bye to. Sexual compulsion and codependency, yes, but let me start with the one that will kill me first. Crystal meth. I knew about you before I even tried you. The first CMA meeting I ever attended wasn't for me. The ex-partner of my boyfriend at the time was deeply addicted and in bad shape, so we went to a meeting in support of him. I remember a young guy there talking about wanting to be "poz'd" when he was high. I had never heard this before—it terrified me at the time. Who knew that just a few short years later, I would be HIV-positive, thanks to my first relapse on you—and being asked by another young guy to "poz" him.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

ABOUT THIS ISSUE

WHEN WE WERE USING, OUR relationship with crystal meth became paramount to all others. Our using eventually led to isolation, loneliness, and depression. But once we came into Crystal Meth Anonymous, we found that all was not lost. Bridges we'd burned behind us could be rebuilt to people who loved and cared about us. Working the Steps, we could establish our conscious contact with a Higher Power and humbly ask that our character defects be removed. Growing in understanding of ourselves and others—often by making amends to people we had harmed or abandoned—we slowly reached out to old friends and made new ones in the fellowship of CMA.

Our goal for this edition of Crystal Clear is to shed some light on the complex issues surrounding intimacy and relationships in sobriety. How do we really connect to another person? To paraphrase the fabulous RuPaul: If we don't love ourselves, how in the hell can we expect to love somebody else? (Amen!)

Elaborating on this touchy (pun intended) subject in this issue, a few fellows share their experience, strength, and hope on “breaking up” with crystal meth. Others give some insight into how they are finally learning to love themselves. One tells how he is developing a new sexual ideal. And finally, three writers describe their journeys on the road to rediscovering love.

We hope this issue of Crystal Clear helps you unlock some of the mystery around sober intimacy. And we encourage you to submit your own pieces for future issues! Comments, suggestions and submissions can be sent to newsletter@nycma.org. ■

ESCAPING THE DEFAULT MODE

Jon N.

The deluge landed in sheets on the roof. Its cascade against the windows came with a rush of peace and relief. Safely inside from that downpour, I feasted on the qualification and shares of my CMA fellows. I was in the right place.

The day before, I had found out that my friend and “running buddy” Rob had died many months earlier, ostensibly from the disease of addiction. He had been found dead, the victim of suicide. Indeed, Rob had been someone I'd always wished to see at a meeting. I had hoped he'd find his way to the program. It was not to be. I dealt with the news in the best way I knew how: creatively and intellectually. I made a collage of images of him that I posted to Facebook and searched for an appropriate poem to accompany it.

Yet spiritually I suffered a disconnect. Talk about self-centeredness—quickly Rob's tragedy became all about me: If only I'd said this... If only I'd done that... In my thoughts I could have somehow altered the trajectory of Rob's life and prevented his tragedy. I was consumed by regret.

This grandiose and morbid reflection began to get the better of me. I planned to act out sexually with someone I'd previously used. I was putting myself at risk;

giving in to the tête-à-tête with a past using buddy was like laying on a track and waiting for the meth train to run over me. It would only be a matter of time before it arrived.

Because I didn't want to lose my six-plus months of clean time, I abruptly ended my dangerous liaison. While I wanted to isolate after the departure of my “associate,” I knew that would put me in further danger. Taking contrary action was required; I hurried to an afternoon session of my outpa-

tient program and planned to attend an evening CMA meeting afterward.

At the CMA meeting I took the burning desire to let others know about my precarious situation. But I still felt the urge to escape into a chemically-induced oblivion. Social anxiety is an ever-present issue with me and the thought of going to fellowship after the meeting was excruciating. Yet, at that moment, I realized I needed it more than ever.

Surrendering to the wet gray afternoon and the program, and acting contrary to my desires, allowed me to stay clean one more day. ■



WHAT IF I WANT TO WRITE AN ARTICLE FOR THE NEWSLETTER?

Contact a member of the NYCMA Literature Committee. You may also send an email to newsletter@nycma.org.

GOOD-BYE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Crystal—you're cunning, baffling, and powerful. The great deceiver. I used you for the first time in the fall of 2003, at a point when I'd lost hope in finding a stable, healthy relationship. I turned to online hook-up sites (an addiction I was able to say good-bye to just over a year ago through grace and recovery), and when someone asked if I had ever smoked you before, I said no. I forgot the foreshadowing I had been given by my Higher Power in that meeting, and didn't think twice about trying you. I loved that you lifted my inhibitions and gave me the feeling of falling in love immediately.... The sex was incredible—I just couldn't orgasm. I tried and tried relentlessly, ending up in a pool of sweat for my efforts. The guy I was with that first time left me a note: "You're a kewl guy—don't try so hard to cum next time." Nearly seven years later, on May 11, 2010, after seven hours alone, surrounded

by porn magazines strewn across the bed, I was still ending up in that same pool of pointless sweat. It always ended the same way, from the first time to the last time. The intimacy you promised was false, immediate, and unsustainable.

You stopped working years ago, and for the past three years in recovery, we've become more distant. My visits with you have gone from every few weeks to every few months to as long as eight and a half months apart. Somehow, I still chased that first high, forgetting what you take from me when I use and how little you give back. I forgot my last high, which means it wasn't the last one. But now I have irrefutable evidence of both the payoffs and consequences of using you. It's all there, on paper, so I can never forget where you take me. I can't cheat my heart anymore. I raise the white flag—you win. I cannot use you successfully again. You want to see me

dead, and I'm not ready to die. So while I honor the good moments we shared at one time, I have to say good-bye. I surrender to my powerlessness over you, and I will do so each day I hope for the rest of my life. I never have to come down from you again if I don't pick you up. I never have to feel suicidal again. I never have to feel as alone as I did when I last used you.

But I do thank you for one thing. Through you, I've come to recovery, to a way of life I might never have discovered without you. Through this process, my sexual compulsion has lifted to a large degree, and I know that I will use the same tools to work through my codependency issues. So I am a grateful recovering addict—the whole journey was worth it for leading me to the happy, joyous, and free life I will enjoy in sobriety, one day at a time, without you. ■

MY BOYFRIEND'S PROBLEM

Michael A.

I entered the program to get my boyfriend sober. I wasn't so sure that I had a problem, but I was certain he did. And because I had taken it upon myself to control everything in the universe to keep myself safe (note: I wasn't particularly successful at this), I thought I could force him to stop using by getting sober myself. I soon discovered that perhaps I did have a problem. I took suggestions and started the Steps. When I asked my sponsor about the best way to coax my boyfriend into program, he laughed. "This is a program of

attraction rather than promotion," he told me. I didn't like this answer.

But somehow in those first few months, my attention shifted from my boyfriend to me. I didn't want to focus on me, because I didn't really like me. Without drugs

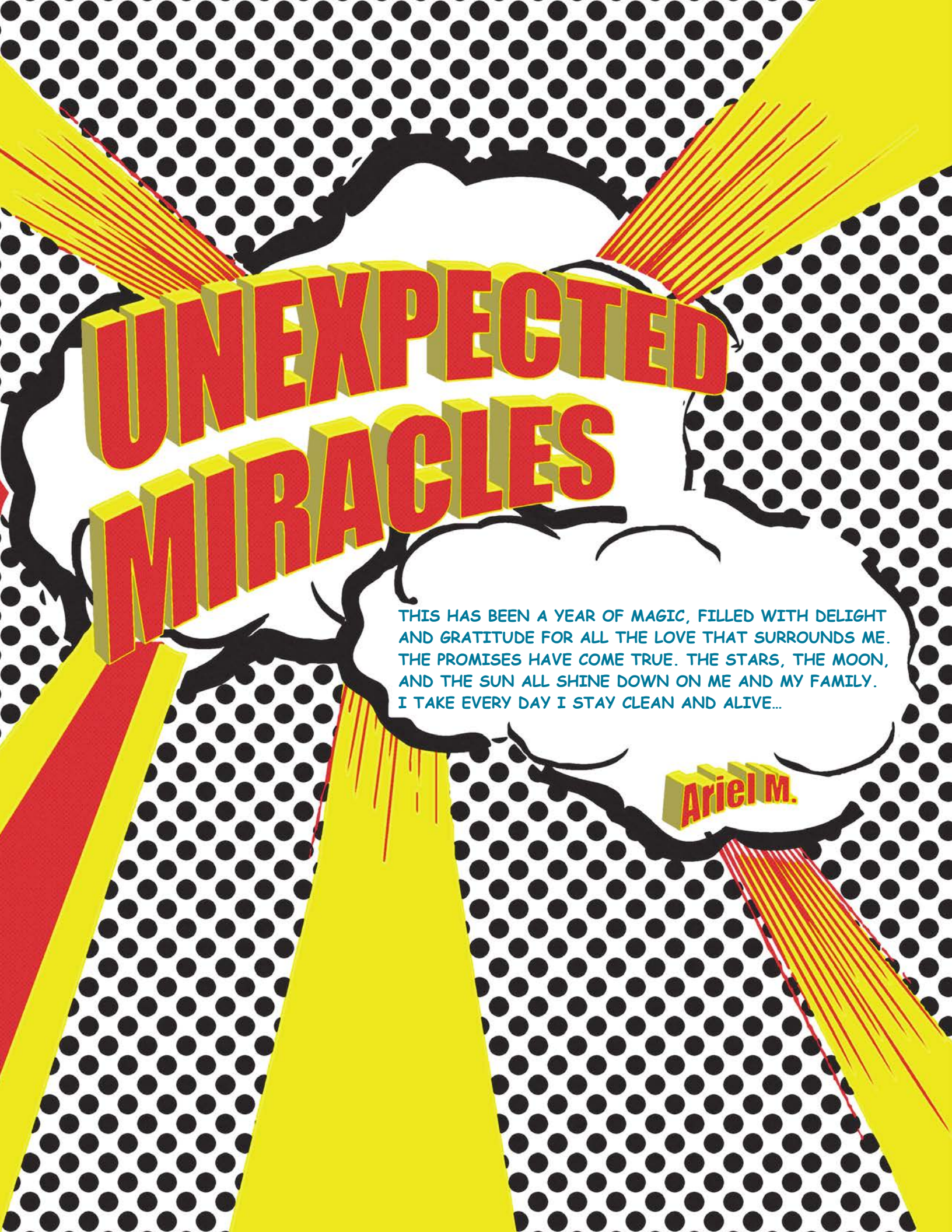
successfully kept at bay for most of my life. Somewhere in the messiness of these feelings, I began to love myself in a very tentative way. I discovered intimacy in a burgeoning relationship with my Higher Power. I saw acceptance in the faces of others in the rooms. And meanwhile, at home, the man I had fallen in love with years before reappeared—he came out of hiding when he stopped being afraid of me.

“AND MEANWHILE, AT HOME, THE MAN I HAD FALLEN IN LOVE WITH YEARS BEFORE REAPPEARED—HE CAME OUT OF HIDING WHEN HE STOPPED BEING AFRAID OF ME.”

and alcohol in my system, I had feelings—unpleasant feelings, monstrous feelings, feelings of all shapes and sizes—that I had

My boyfriend ended up putting down the drug on his own (not a method that would work for me). I was on a sober retreat several years ago when I got a phone call from him. He'd called to propose marriage to me. We've been married for two years now and live an imperfect but happy life together. ■

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?"



UNEXPECTED MIRACLES

THIS HAS BEEN A YEAR OF MAGIC, FILLED WITH DELIGHT
AND GRATITUDE FOR ALL THE LOVE THAT SURROUNDS ME.
THE PROMISES HAVE COME TRUE. THE STARS, THE MOON,
AND THE SUN ALL SHINE DOWN ON ME AND MY FAMILY.
I TAKE EVERY DAY I STAY CLEAN AND ALIVE...

Ariel M.

...as a gift. Even the days when dark clouds loom close to the horizon present opportunities to learn and grow and be open to the Source through prayer and meditation. All of this is due to working day by day on my spiritual life and staying sober with the help of the principles of the program: trust in the fellowship, Step work with my sponsor, and my connection to the Creative Spirit of the Universe.

Shortly before my four-year anniversary, I made a decision to stop going to meetings for a multitude of reasons. The main one was pain. Even though I was still praying and meditating and keeping in contact with a Higher Power of my understanding, I was not living a sober life. I wasn't working all the ingredients of a program of recovery, including relying on the support of the fellowship and doing honest Step work with a sponsor. I soon sought escape through the only other means I knew: drugs and alcohol. Although I didn't pick up crystal or hallucinogens, my drugs of choice, I began drinking and taking painkillers to stop the hurt I was feeling deep inside my soul. I felt relief again from the depression and pain, and the resentments I had were no longer eating me alive.

There came a point during my relapse where I began to notice my life was no longer headed in a forward direction. The relief I had felt was slipping away. I asked G-d for help, for signs of what to do next. One night while I was out dancing, the first sign appeared. Under the flashing lights on the dance floor, Aaron, an ex-boyfriend I had used a lot of drugs with in college—including crystal meth—approached me. Our last encounters had been unpleasant, yet I gave him a big hug when he came up to me. I sensed something different about his demeanor.

Aaron offered to buy me a water. He said he had thought of me earlier in the week, and I said I wasn't surprised, because things like that often happened in my life. As he nodded in agreement, Aaron began to apologize for what had happened in our past. The apology wasn't an ordinary "I'm sorry"—the way he expressed his regret for his behavior years ago sounded like a Step Nine amends. I asked him if he was in a Twelve Step program. People who are in recovery understand immediately the difference between an "I'm sorry" and an amends. In asking for forgiveness during an amends, there is an honest assessment of how we hurt people in our lives and a willingness to make right those wrongs.

We went outside and talked about G-d, spirituality, and Step work. It felt good to be chatting with someone about the program's principles. Aaron was just like me, torn up and twisted from drugs, and now he had experienced a psychic change due to work he had done in recovery. In sobriety, addicts like Aaron and me are given a chance to heal, opening the door to live and love freely. Underneath the mask of all the drugs we had done was my authentic self, yearning to express itself in this life.

Over the next couple of months, other signs directed me back to CMA. I was deeply grateful—because not everyone gets the chance to come back. Out of an amends, Aaron and I began a committed relationship. I knew that I needed to be with someone who also had a strong connection with a Higher Power of his understanding. Aaron and I both believe in the Oneness that connects all of us in the universe. Without putting

our sobriety first we cannot sustain the wonderful relationship we have today.

During this past year, I have been astonished by unexpected miracles. Aaron and I were married by a rabbi whom I had met during morning prayers on my birthday, as I was asking for a blessed new year in my life and guidance toward taking right actions. When I honestly ask my Higher Power for direction, I am guided in profound ways. Aaron and I were surrounded by loving family and friends while we exchanged vows, and danced the night away in celebration of our sacred union. Our wedding was truly the happiest night of our lives!

As newlyweds, we are expecting our first child together. To feel this life growing inside of me—to even have the opportunity to bring a new life into this world—is humbling and exciting. Having a child was not in my plans for this year, and neither was finding my loving partner. As I have learned, my plans and G-d's plans aren't always the same. Anything G-d sends me, I accept with an open heart. I am open to receive blessings and challenges alike. Recovery work has given me the ability to handle life as it is, not as I demand it should be. As long as I get out of my own way and stay open and willing, my fears (of being a healer, a wife, and a mother) dissipate, and my faith and trust in G-d that life will unfold as it should takes over. Life happens! Love happens! Miracles come to pass! ■



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.

SEX IS NOT A WEAPON

Stephen F.

Early in life, I learned that sex and sexuality were tools. I flirted to make friends and offered myself sexually to get what I wanted: jobs, money, and especially drugs. Very few of my relationships were based on a mutual interest or even respect for each other—they were contracts: What can I get from you? What can you get from me? And my few friendships that did become lasting and substantial originally started out in bed!

Of course my drug use perpetuated this. For me, sex was intrinsically tied into my drug and alcohol use. By the time I got sober, it had been over ten years since I had had sex without drugs or alcohol. Any sober reference I had was a distant memory.

As terrified as I was of sober sex, when I heard the suggestion to wait ninety days before having sex I thought, No way. No one was going to tell me when and how I could use this tool! Even though I readily took all other suggestions—meetings, service, phone calls, etc.—I was stubborn on this one.

I stopped, remembered to be open-minded, and thought about it. These suggestions are not made arbitrarily. So I sought out the principle behind the suggestion. Why should I wait? And that's when I realized the suggestion was meant to protect me. Not just because sex could be triggering, but because I had been using this tool of sex as a weapon my entire adult life! No wonder drugs and al-

cohol had gone hand in hand with sex for me. I wanted to be so far removed from the physical act—which should have been a wonderful and connected experience—but instead it had become a vehicle for shame and shallow validation. I needed some time to figure out how I was going to repair the damage from years of unhealthy sex.

At first, this pained me. However, I took another suggestion: Make a sex plan! With a plan, I was able to lay out some goals and describe the feelings I wanted to experience around sex, relationships I wanted to develop, and ways I wanted to feel about myself and my partners. Then I was able to set some boundaries. I had never had any boundaries around sex and therefore, I had no respect for myself sexually. These new delineations weren't restrictions to my sex life (because no one was going to restrict me!) but rather guidelines to help me meet my sexual goals. Rather than saying "I cannot," I was saying "I don't want to!" For example, I don't want to have sex with someone using drugs or alcohol, and I don't want to have sex with someone unless I know his first and last name. It sounds silly, but these were small steps on the road to repairing sex for me; for regaining a respect for myself I had lost long ago.

Today, as I plunge into a new kind of relationship—dating—I've already established a healthy practice of sex in my sobriety. No longer does sex leave me feeling ashamed or momentarily validated. And with a newfound self-respect, I realize that I am more than a sexual object. I'm a beautiful human being with so much more to offer in all of my relationships. ■

SAVE THE DATE

Want to meet and do workshops with fellows from D.C. and Philly?

NYCMA will be hosting this year's Mid-Atlantic Regional Crystal Meth Anonymous Conference, tentatively scheduled for:

Saturday, June 4, 2011

Stay tuned for more info!



GETTING TO KNOW YOU

Matthew W.

"Getting to know you, getting to know all about you..." are lyrics from the great Rodgers and Hammerstein musical *The King and I*. When I think about intimacy and relationships in sobriety, this melody starts to play in my head. One has to get to truly know themselves before getting to know another person. For the first time in my life, I am taking the time to get to know myself. I am starting with the main person in my life and then moving on. Always satisfying others and wanting proper approval—being a true people pleaser—has made me put myself in a dim light. I have never let myself totally out of the light, but I never put myself truly in the spotlight with all attention on just me. The time has come. I need to take center stage and work on my own inner happiness.

The last relationship I was in was not a sober one by any means. My use of crystal meth became more serious while we were together, and I totally let the other person take over. I lost a part of myself. The only thing I gained out of the relationship was

I WANT TO KNOW I AM FULLY PRESENT AND READY TO GET TO KNOW ALL ABOUT SOMEONE ELSE.

the true kiss of death, addiction. Now I am taking my life back into my own hands and marching to a different beat. I am looking at myself in the mirror for the first time and truly seeing who I am. I am admitting my

defects, as well as the attributes I possess. I am working every day to stay sober, and feeling every emotion that passes through my soul and embracing it with open arms. I am no longer running from myself. I am for the first time in a relationship with myself.

From this I can mend the relationships that I almost lost because of my usage. My family is strongly back in my life. I can hear in their voices and see in their eyes that they know the new road I am traveling down day by day. I feel like I am a snake shedding its skin and starting anew. The only person that can truly help me change my life is me. I am building this strong foundation within myself so someday I will be ready to give myself to another person and sing those lyrics to them. I want to know I am fully present and ready to get to know all about someone else. ■

RETURNING ALIVE

Eduardo V.

Eduardo V. also describes his "break up" with crystal. After years of struggling to maintain some semblance of sanity despite a crippling drug habit and several seriously dysfunctional relationships, he knew he was done.

Something inside me was terribly broken. I started not liking the way I felt even when I was using, and I made excuses so I wouldn't have to go to my friend's drug parties. For almost four months, I did not use, but then I started thinking I was recovered and that I could use one more weekend. That relapse lasted two weeks. I missed my son-in-law's birthday, and after five days of coming down, I realized that my granddaughter's birthday party was the next day and I still looked so bad that I couldn't let her see my face.

I fell on my knees in my room and cried for the rest of the day. That was a Thursday. The next Tuesday, I attended my first CMA meeting, the Tuesday Beginner's

Meeting at the Center. I made that meeting my home group, and I committed myself to this amazing life-saving program. That



WE THREW IT IN HIS GARBAGE AS A SIGN OF MY COMPLETE SURRENDER.

night I got my sponsor, and I hope he and his husband will be among my best friends

forever. The following week, I brought all my party paraphernalia to his building and together we threw it in his garbage chute as a sign of my complete surrender. I had forgotten my pipe at home and I promised him to take care of it that night—and I did. Later, I wrote this little piece of poetry to commemorate that special moment and I want to share it with you, my new friends, my real friends.

*The glass broke in a trillion pieces
like when I crushed Her
to prepare the deadly infusion
The ritual, now over,
is stamped in my brain and heart
with sadness for Her,
divorced forever—
And infinite release and joy
for my new freedom,
and quiet peace
that brings back to me
the happiness to live—
For me, for my new friends
and for my family
to whom
I'm returning alive... ■*

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)** 32-15 34th St, Apt 2B, Astoria
 8:00 PM **CT #1 Beginners (o)** St. Paul's on the Green, 60 East Ave., Norwalk, CT

TUESDAY

- 7:45 AM **Good Morning, Higher Power (c)** Gay Men's Health Crisis
 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 (c)** 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

THURSDAY

- 7:45 AM **Good Morning, Higher Power (c)** Gay Men's Health Crisis
 6:30 PM **CMA Agnostics (c)** Gay Men's Health Crisis
 7:30 PM **Conscious Contact/11th Step (o)** Lesbian & Gay Community Center
 8:00 PM **Big Book Study (o)** Lesbian & Gay Community Center

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)** Lesbian & Gay Community Center
 8:30 PM **The O'Toole Meeting (c)** French Church

SATURDAY

- 8:30 AM **Saturday Morning Pier 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

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.

†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.

DIRECTIONS

- **French Church** 128 W. 16th St., Ground Floor
- **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, Conference Room Minnesota 1
- **Realization Center** 25 East 15th Street, 7th Floor

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.



© 2011, New York Crystal Meth Anonymous. 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 publication, 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
 P.O. Box 1517, Old Chelsea Station • New York, New York. 10113