

CLOTHES DRUGS PILLS ALCOHOL  
GAMBLING FOOD CRIME GAMING  
PILLS EXERCISE SEX SHOPPING

CRIME DRUGS PILLS ALCOHOL

ADDICTION

*Let's End This!*

PILLS WINE FOOD GAMBLING

CRIME DRUGS PILLS INTERNET  
SEX SHOPPING FOOD DRUGS

VOLUME 24

SEPTEMBER 2023

# TWO ROADS

*and the wisdom to know the difference*



*God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change*

*The courage to change the things I can*

**An honest chronicle of the stories and service of the Incarcerated Women and Men of the Illinois Department of Corrections**

# To All Readers

Our monthly newsletter focuses on three phases: *Rehabilitation*, *Restoration and Re-Entry*. These are the necessary phases of a successful incarceration and transition back to society.

*Rehabilitation* involves the struggle for change one confronts during incarceration.

*Restoration* reflects the refined version of one's self that we've become and our restored self seeks service of self-worth to the world.

Finally, *Re-Entry* is the ultimate goal one accomplishes through class study, self-study or modification programs completed during one's incarceration.

We are TWO ROADS, and we want to be a viable resource for our readers. We serve you by sharing the honest chronicle of the stories and service of the incarcerated women and men of the Illinois Department of Corrections. Join our movement.

TWO ROADS Editorial Staff

**\*\*Please Note:** All letters, emails and photos will be reviewed by personnel **PRIOR** to being received by the TWO ROADS editorial staff. All information that is not pertaining to TWO ROADS will be discarded. Thank you for respecting the guidelines.

# DISCLAIMER

TWO ROADS is built for bringing integrity and honesty about the people who are submitting their stories. There are times where the editors are required to make changes due to spelling errors or grammatical structure. Please know that **we will never take away your voice**, however, understand that we take pride in our work and strive to be the best in our representation of your voice.

Thank you.



# *Our Mission Statement*

“We're committed to empowering those most impacted by harmful systems to become dynamic leaders and agents of change. Using the connecting, restorative power of these stories, we hope to do our part in bringing us all together to overcome societal ills, such as violence, poverty and mass incarceration.”



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**YOU ARE NOT ALONE.**

**40.3M**  
PEOPLE AGED 12 OR OLDER HAD A SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER IN YEAR 2020

2020 National Survey on Drug Use and Health

 Denotes TR Contributor

# TR

TWO ROADS



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# NATIONAL RECOVERY MONTH

# Editor's Take

It is amazing how one person's experiences with addiction, recovery and personal transformation can truly affect your perspective. I was delighted to have our guest contributor, Rachel Tucker here at our facility and to say that the story of her father, Vencon Davis, was nothing short of amazement to how one, which is on the outside, resonates with those who are on the inside (see page 47).

While this Q and A had a dual purpose, not only for our TWO ROADS e-zine, but also for our potential future TWO ROADS: Inside Outside Podcast, to hear how one situation has cause and effect impact on another, shows how ardently we, as humans, are seeking change, growth and hope.

For change to happen, there has to be some form of understanding to whatever the issue is. We have found ourselves feeling sorry for ourselves and when this happens, the excuses are boundless. Change never comes!

My personal example: one of my favorite uncles had a nasty drug habit. I'd admired this man because of his hard work (he had two jobs), but his dark side was shooting dope (heroin). I didn't miss it, as he did it in front of me, and when I asked how it made him feel, his response was *"it takes me to another world"*.



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That was his stress reliever. There are so many others that have stress relievers: alcohol, gambling, exercise, shopping, worrying, sex, pills. Let's be clear, those things may be the antidote that allows you to go to another world, but is the risk worth the relief? Maybe you are one who has an issue that you are dealing with or have dealt with. Volume 24 is a difficult one for each and every contributor who has had dug deep into their past to speak on things that they might not want to do.

As for my uncle, he has now been clean for the last seven months, longer than he ever has been since starting t his journey in 1984. This is a major accomplishment and I am thankful for this and his continued recovery. There will be needed information in the coming pages from statistics to guidance to all out help. I hope that you are able to resonate with these issues and that you will make the significant changes in your life!

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*...living one day at a time; enjoying one moment at a time; taking this world as it is and not as I would have it; Trusting that You will make all things right if I surrender to Your will; so that I may be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with You forever in the next. Amen*

This is the rest of the serenity prayer from page 2,  
My question is "did you know that this existed"?

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# IN OTHER NEWS

I'd like to introduce our three new members to the *TWO ROADS* editorial team: **Ms. Lakisha Woodard, Mr. Hafis HAAQ, and Ms. Evelyn 'Qiyamah' Jackson**. Mr. HAAQ has over three decades in the system but has plenty of experience in the prison community and has given many contributions to other platforms. If you read the *Father's Day Issue* where he spoke of his meeting of a man that is his father, then you know that he'll give us the lift in TWO ROADS.

Ms. Woodard has provided much needed information to her community and is an active member of the garden crew at Logan. Ms. Woodard also is a member of the ***Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Individual in Custody Board*** for the Illinois Department of Corrections. Ms. Jackson has been a recurrent writer to TWO ROADS for many of our topics and a source of wisdom and power, with hard hitting issues. Both Ms. Woodard and Ms. Jackson will give the perspective to articles that none of the men can give and the edge to motivate and uplift other individuals in custody.

Lastly, TWO ROADS would like to thank our Liaison, Ms. Rowan, Warden Carothers, Mr. Warnsing and the IT staff (Tammy Drowns) for expanding our workspace and giving TWO ROADS room to be more creative and give the people what they want! THANKX!



# From The Pain of The Past To Living in The Present

One night around the age of twelve, I took my first toke of marijuana, first drag of a cigarette, and first drink of liquor. It seemed as if I was in heaven and hell all at the same time. Each tasted awful and burned going down. I felt great for a while, then I got awfully sick. Face first at the helm of the white school bus, (porcelain toilet) I told myself I hated this feeling and would never use again. But when I woke the next morning all I could recall was the euphoria I felt a few hours before I got sick. During that small window of time, I felt like the owner of my own skin for the first time in my life.

I spent the next 18 years chasing that feeling while telling myself many times I'd never do it again; always trying to convince myself I had some control and could stop any time; and never filling that God sized hole I had thought was filled that first night. I'm finally on a journey through recovery. 28 years later after spending approximately 14 years of my life in jails or prisons (3 years to go) and leaving a wake of pain for most of the people who cared about me. I'm recovering from an illness from which physicians and the scientific community have found no known cure. Most of my life I suffered from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body. I'm an alcoholic and the disease of which I and many others suffer is alcoholism.

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Most people don't understand the alcoholic and thus wonder why he or she will not just drink like other people. They have the thought that if he or she just found the right person, landed the right job, came into a fortune of money, then they'd surely quit or drink normally. Through this journey of recovery, I discovered I have an allergy to alcohol (Illness of the body).

Once I take a drink, I have an allergic reaction; something happens in my body that doesn't happen to a normal person. I have a compulsive craving for more and have no control; once I start, I can't stop. I've always been a person of excess and have always wanted more. This is not isolated to alcohol; it includes things like drugs, material possessions, sex, money, attention – the list goes on. Somehow it all leads back to more alcohol and that first drink. As I drink more and more, my inhibitions are lowered, and I begin to do and say things I wouldn't or couldn't do sober. I become unashamed, even brave, but most of the time I just make really bad choices. I'm on a train which is its own conductor.

When the train finally stops, I'm left standing in a puddle of my own urine; meaning there's a wake of major consequences in which I must now face and a pile of circumstances in which I have left others. The shame, guilt, remorse, and regret set in, and I usually make a fox hole prayer, making a deal with the creator, if he assists me, then I'll get on a straight path. If I was given a lie detector, I'd pass because I'm always sincere about getting straight and always mean well not to drink again. Each time I found myself on the other side of things doing well just

about to reach the top of this pit of consequences. Then, I awake in someone's yard, in my vehicle on the side of the highway, on a stranger's floor, couch, bed, even worse in jail. I'm either recoiling at the thought of the acts I performed the days prior or calling others to find out what I did, because I fail to recall.

The problem begins again when I find my consciousness telling me just one drink, you got this, you can drink like a normal person, you deserve it, and you have been doing well. At other times I don't even recall the first drink and wonder how in the world I got on this train again. Seldom, I may be successful at drinking one or two; this only furthers the erroneous thoughts that I may become a casual drinker. This is known as an obsession (illness of the mind).

This illness tells me I have no illness, no problem exists, and at any time I can control my drinking. It's an obsession to control which I'll never be able to control (a false reality or fantasy). This illness allows a momentary lapse in the memory of all the consequences and hurt I endured and caused others to endure. For that moment, I only remember the euphoria; it's a window that is just enough for me to take the first drink.

I paid in money, blood, loneliness, desperation and time. And that is only a small part of the damage I caused. It was just the right amount of pain, loneliness and desperation that woke me up to the hurt I caused self and others. Only a recovering alcoholic could see desperation as a gift. But it's mostly through this gift that one is

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finally **willing** to try something different in order to break the cycle of insanity.

What I discovered is it's never been about not drinking. The desire to not drink is only an added bonus as the result of working and living in the steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. Because the truth is, I was a miserable person to be around even when I wasn't drinking and still made bad choices when sober. Even dry I had no defense against the first drink. I was broken spiritually and had no spiritual principles to live by. By finally realizing and admitting I was **powerless over alcohol** and that **my life had become unmanageable**, I was able to begin to look at the solution.

Next, I was tasked with taking immediate action. ***I have no power over alcohol and cannot manage life on my own***, (my track record proves that) ***which means that I have to find a power greater than myself and be willing to allow that power to manage my life***, to guide and control my thoughts and actions. Through the step of a moral self-inventory, and the step following it, I was tasked with fearlessly searching the result of alcoholism, which has been a lifetime of emotional and physical hurt and pain for me and others. My drunken escapades put people's lives in jeopardy. They've cost my mother her son, my sisters their brother, my daughter her father, and nearly cost a woman her life. This program has shown me who I am and has allowed me to return to the man I was created to be. **What I have been given is not a cure but a daily reprieve that is tantamount on my willingness to work on my**



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recovery and practice the 12 steps' spiritual principals one day at a time for the rest of my life.

Searching myself and my past; and a **willingness** to become rigorously honest with myself, God, and another person. An experience which was the most humbling and insightful I have ever had... I discovered a plethora of character defects, mostly a false sense of control, false fears, false pride, selfishness; self-will run riot, and self-centeredness.

I've become **willing** to allow my higher power to remove these defects or liabilities and replace them with good character traits and assets. I try to be more genuine, caring, and loving. I have less fears and anxieties and feel more care and concern for others; I'm selfless and not so selfish. My new craving is an urge to serve others in any way my higher power permits. That God sized hole I've been trying to fill with alcohol and other harmful things can only be filled through my higher power, by doing the good things he has laid out in front of me. To allow God to use me as he deems fit is the proper use of my self-will.

I now strive to use the pain of my past to help others live in the present and have hope for the future, instead of living in fear, shame and guilt. Sharing my story with them and helping them understand the steps so they may possibly one day allow the higher power of their understanding to restore them to sanity. Just as mine is doing for me. Each day I search myself fearlessly, being honest, and am



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**willing to go to any lengths to maintain my sobriety.** This means accepting others for who they are, accepting life on life's terms and without self-pity, and correcting my own faults.

This author chose to remain anonymous, in an effort to share the story of alcoholism and addiction. We thank you for your words and your trust in TWO ROADS



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# Another Chance

Donevin Quick - Kewanee

The most significant obstacle I've ever faced and am still trying to overcome is the death of my girlfriend two months after giving birth to our daughter, while I was in custody.

In January of 2017, my girlfriend of two years found out she was pregnant. I was out on bond for a 2015 delivery and 2016 possession. We were both addicted to cocaine and heroin. With no other financial means, we were selling drugs and stealing to support ourselves. The doctor told us if we planned on keeping the baby, she'd have to get clean immediately. I knew the only way that would happen was if we got clean together.

I contacted a co-ed rehab and detox center on Chicago's South side and was told to be there at 7:45a.m. the next day. Beds were available first come first serve. The place was ideal for couples. Even though we weren't housed together, we saw each other for groups and meals. A smile and some handholding were all the support needed to get the other through trying days.

Fast forward seventy days and we were out healthy and clear-headed.



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The rehab helped us find an apartment with the little money we had. I went to work at a concrete construction company, worked a ton of hours, and earned really good money. My girlfriend got a job as an office assistant with good benefits and decent pay. We lived within our means, and I focused on saving knowing an inevitable prison sentence was looming.

All too quickly my August trial date came. I was found guilty and remanded to custody. Before sentencing, I was indicted for a 2017 delivery from before I went to rehab. The state had held the case until after my trial in case I beat the earlier one. At sentencing in September, the state asked for sixteen years. With proof I completed rehab, my income and savings documents, and that I was expecting a daughter in December, the judge showed me some lenience and gave me ten years. I still faced a 2016 possession and the 2017 delivery. The state offered me three and sixteen consecutively (*Note: the term in prison for consecutive sentences is called "ran wild"*). It looked like it'd take some back and forth before we came to better terms.

On October 12, 2017, my daughter was born healthy and addiction free. My girlfriend seemed to be doing well. We were in constant contact, yet the stress of my case and pending years seemed to be overwhelming. A short time later, her mother started worrying as evidence of relapse came apparent. On December 14<sup>th</sup>, I was notified my girlfriend was found dead of a heroin overdose from the night before

Her mother had gone to her apartment after the phone went unanswered all day. My daughter was crying in her crib. If not for her grandmother, she very well may have died of starvation in just a day or two. This news had me on the verge of giving up. The state wouldn't come down on their offer. Then around Christmas, my daughter's grandmother sent me a Christmas card with a picture of my girlfriend and daughter right after they had come home from the hospital.

The card said, "Although I can't blame you for the death of my daughter it's hard not to forget the path you were both on when she got pregnant. I am going to keep Ginell and raise her. This will be the last time you see her until you are out of prison, off parole, have gainful employment, and live in a neighborhood safe to accommodate her needs. Ginell will not be visiting you or taking your calls as she grows up. Your absence will be explained when and if you get it together and you're out. Best of luck, Grandma Tinell."

Unable to sleep much, I spent most nights up keeping to myself and my racing thoughts. Then, one night a Sargent on third shift stopped by my cell. He said he heard what was going on asked how I was holding up, and if I was the same Quick from the old jail (I began coming to jail and prison at 17 in the old jail in 1994). When I told him I was, he told me something that changed my life. "Quick,

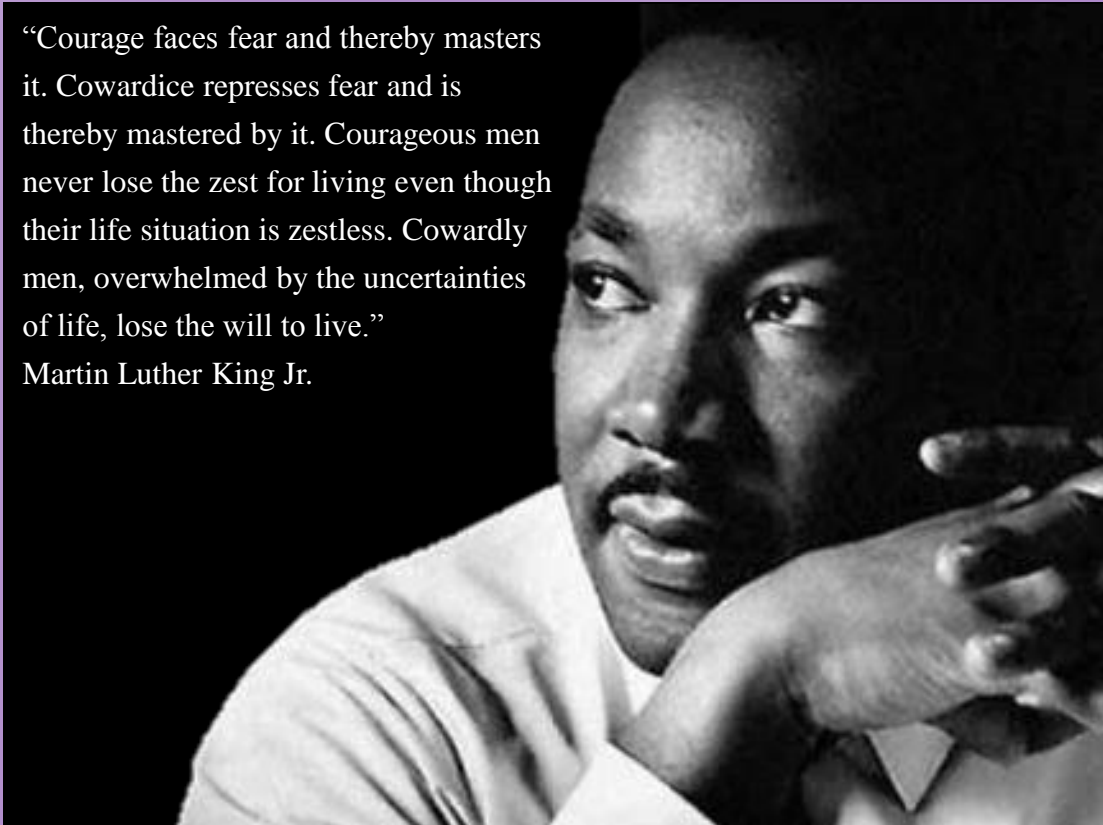


despite how things might look, you still have another chance, and your daughter will one day have a father if you do what's necessary.”

In October 2018, I was sentenced to a total of 21 years at 50% and sent to prison. September 2022, I was transferred to Kewanee after not receiving one ticket in over five years. In the ten years I spent in prison previously, I had over 40 major tickets and spent almost three total years in segregation. I send unanswered cards to my daughter every holiday. I know one day I will have another chance.

“Courage faces fear and thereby masters it. Cowardice represses fear and is thereby mastered by it. Courageous men never lose the zest for living even though their life situation is zestless. Cowardly men, overwhelmed by the uncertainties of life, lose the will to live.”

Martin Luther King Jr.



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# TWO ROADS

Presents

## The TIME Issue

We will look into the inner workings of the women and men in custody, as they explore the mental and physical anguish of doing time in the Illinois Department of Corrections.

We are asking those who have served more than 25 years for the men and more than 15 years for the women to write and share their stories of hope, change, ambition and progress. We feel it merits understanding, because this idea of a moment in one's life changing one's direction and purpose in life is integral to the rehabilitation process. Who knows, you might change someone's life.

### **Without staff support:**

Mail submission, photo to:

TWO ROADS EDITOR  
2021 Kentville Road  
Kewanee IL 61443

### Outsiders and Individuals-In-Custody

(WITH Staff Support)

Please send your submission and  
scanned photo to  
[doc.tworoads@illinois.gov](mailto:doc.tworoads@illinois.gov)  
"ATTN: TIME 2024"

**DEADLINE: JANUARY 19, 2024**

# A Desire to Change

Bismil-la hi-Rahman Nir-Rahim

(In The Name of Allah, The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful)

In order for me to understand the power of addiction, I requested to go to substance abuse program at Dwight Correctional Center in 2005. I learned that I have an addictive behavior. My father and brother were addicts. I didn't understand why they behaved the way that they did.

I sold drugs to survive. I was unaware of the lifetime effect that drugs have on you. During that process, I also was an alcoholic and had to have marijuana (to smoke) as well in order to numb myself and block out the fact that I was contributing to the destruction of others as the next person did to my family members.

I learned these things while participating in the program. While you're deep in your mess, you don't consider yourself an *addict*. Not until your mind and body tell you that you need it. After several years into my sentence, I started taking un-prescribed medications. I loved that feeling; to the point that I had no food because I *sold it*. I manipulated the mental health system and was able to get what I wanted.



*Evelyn Jackson*

TWO ROADS Newest  
Associate Editor



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Again, I didn't feel I was an addict, but I knew better. I was in denial and was ashamed of my actions. I *portrayed* as if I had it all together. I carried myself in a way that nobody could see the struggles I suffered. I thought I was numbing myself from all of my pain. I was heavenly medicated through my toxic/unhealthy relationships as well as the deaths of my son, brother and grandmother. My actions were completely insane. Going in and out of segregation and being combative with staff and inmates.

In 2019, I started refusing all medication. Having a clear mind allowed me to see me for who I was. Facing all that pain head on was tough. I started to surround myself around positive people. I learned to talk through my feelings instead of numbing myself, no matter what; those feelings and thoughts are still there and need to be addressed in order to get passed them.

People who are addicted numb themselves to escape reality. Others start their addiction from peer pressure, or just out of pure curiosity. However, at some point, you'll begin to walk away. No matter what your personal addiction is, the results are the same..."**INSANITY**".

ALL PRAISES due to Allah. I dug myself out of that mental hole. I can attest to the greatest feeling you'll experience after you gain sobriety from **any addiction**.



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You'll see the blessings Allah is bestowing on you or whoever your higher power is. Your outlook on your situation will change. You'll be able to clearly see the light at the end of the tunnel.

I encourage everybody that's suffering from an addiction, whether it be drugs, pills, alcohol, sex, money, cigarettes, eating, shopping, gambling, or stealing, try living on the other side of it. **You have to want the desire to change.** If you do it for anyone else, you'll fail, every time. Nothing beats a failure but to try. Keep trying and never give up. One day, you'll get tired of failing and you'll start to succeed.

For me, it was this disappointment I felt from disappointing my loved ones. I wanted better for myself. I'm not sure what will be your *rock bottom*, just don't ignore it and face it head on. May Allah have mercy on anyone that's still suffering. You're not alone. Just ask for help with no shame.

As-Salaam Alaikum,  
Evelyn "Qiyamah" Jackson



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# Can't Stop, Won't stop

## 'Charlton'- Lawrence

I've only been in prison for two months. Twenty-five years to go and I just can't stop. I can't put it down. With little to no women around, I choose to please myself.

Each time I grab the bar, it's time for some action. No higher satisfaction like when I get high up on the pull up bar. Nobody does more pushing in Lawrence than I do. I push and I push hundreds of push-ups in a session. Laced up, I dip my body for about fifteen repetitions. When it comes to moving weight, I can run an hour straight. A strong mind, a strong body, exercising is a strong habit I picked up during my incarceration. Guys pick up the phones and pick up the ball, but very few like me pick up the weights each yard.

I start most days with a wake and bake. After trays, I get right to it. At 5am, I face the music. While most are asleep catching zzz's, I'm getting to the money. After one hour of cardio, I feel invincible, on top of the world, larger than life. It sets my pace for the day. A feeling of victory as I grind down my time here—filtering out the negativity and excuses, inject some motivation into my system like steroids to crank me up, inhale my reality while acknowledging its bitter taste, blow off the steam of injustice while I puff my chest out knowing I stuck to my sticky schedule.



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Each day I put myself on a scale and weigh my willpower to measure my commitment and to verify I'm not cheating myself. In two months, I went from 135lbs of complacency to 139lbs of dedication; a 4lb revelation. It's sickening. I get to shaking when I start stretching. I get to sweating when I hit the cardio. I get the chills just touching the 45s [dumbbells]. The way my body heats up, I know I have a workout fever. This is the stuff to make your heart pump. To make it feel like it's about to bust. Yet, I've never passed out or overdosed.

I tried keeping my addiction a secret, but many have taken notice. They can see what it's doing to my body. The physical marks left behind. Me being all cut up with lumps and bumps. I should get help, but I refuse to use spotters. Why bother? I prefer going at it alone. I've been called stubborn more than once. Heck, I've been called out of my name, labeled a workout junky, an animal, a beast, and a machine.

Some people want me to give it up, but I can't. No matter how much I try and try to be average, they don't understand how hard it is to quit. I've been doing it for so long it controls me. It's constantly on my mind. Day and night, I dwell on my next workout. I spend so much time, effort and energy on it. I sacrificed so much and despite me giving it my all, there's still much work to be done.

When I look into the mirror, I stare at the addict I've become. I reflect on the shame I caused others to feel. Sometimes I cry for all



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the puny guys with no muscles at all. I'm supposed to tell you how addiction has ruined my life. I can't, however, because it didn't. My addiction pushes me forward and strengthens me on days I'm down and feel like giving up. The day I indulged in exercise, I couldn't stop. It consumed me. It possessed me. When I'm locked in, I'm completely zoned out. The only time I'm really cleaned up is after I come from the shower.

Yet, each day I relapse because I fiend for another session. To anyone curious enough to try, I caution you, exercise is highly addictive. You'll have a better body. It happened to me and can happen to you. It's contagious and just like Covid, you can get it too. Symptoms include bigger muscles, a healthier lifestyle, and the feeling of accomplishment.

I choose to please no one but myself, especially with little to no women around. My exercise routine, I can't put it down. I just can't stop. Twenty-five years to go, and I've only been in prison for two months. To all the guys who exercise in prison, stay addicted.



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# Prepared For Success

Preston Graham - Sheridan

Back when I was in the midst of my foolishness and addiction, I could see one objective. My days and nights became a never-ending quest to seek, find, use & abuse the illegal substances that gave me a temporary way of escape. I often ended up late at night feeling lost and defeated.

These were some of the saddest and loneliest times I have ever faced, and I would look for others to blend in with who made me feel wanted and accepted. I relished the thought of having these so-called friends. What I soon came to find out was that most of these “friends” were hanging around for the high they could get, and when the deal went down, none of them were anywhere around.

It never occurred to me that we were all hurting inside, and were trying to cover up the pain, the shame, and the guilt with cocaine, heroin, weed, alcohol, various pills. Once the effects wore off, there we were left to deal with the damage we had caused to our family and our loved ones. The lies we told, the people we hurt, the relationships we destroyed, all served as evidence of our dysfunctional lives. At best, we were our own worst enemy. Guess What?



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Now that the smoke has cleared, you can begin to reawaken that dream that lies within you! Your true purpose in life lies right behind the excuses we make. What is it that you really want to achieve? What besides prison is holding you back? Have you lost touch with your dream? Begin day by day investing in yourself. Be extremely careful how you spend your time, it cannot be regained.

Each moment is precious; Take a sober look at what is going on out there. People are dying every day from Fentanyl overdoses, people are being killed at an alarming rate, and nobody seems to have an answer. What can we do ? We can start by becoming better men and women. Better fathers and mothers to our children, and most of all, better citizens. Most of us in here are returning back into society. Some sooner than others. How do you want to live? Are you preparing yourself for success?

It all begins with you..... Do you have what it takes to make better decisions?

**GIVE YOURSELF A CHANCE TO BE SUCCESSFUL.**



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# The Ripple Effect

## Anonymous – Outside Contributor

Have you ever thrown a stone into a lake and watched the water ripple out away from the impact? No matter how big the stone is, it always ripples, touching everything in its path and leaves agitated waters in its wake. Our lives as alcoholics and addicts are no different, our lives are the lake, our decisions and action are the stones, and the ripples are the consequences of our decisions.

I am selfish and self-centered by nature, because of that, for a long time I believed that the only person my poor choices affected was me. I also blamed my poor choices on the actions of others. When I got sober, I used to say that my alcoholism hurt me more than it hurt anyone else; today I understand that isn't true. There is no way to measure my hurt against the hurt of others.

When my alcoholism and depression started to take off, my friends and family started to disappear. I blamed them for leaving me alone. I thought I was the only one hurting. I now know that my friends and family had to step away, for it was too painful for them to watch me self-implode. I now know that my actions changed the dynamics of my entire friend group, my family and all the people that I came into contact with. With every choice I made, I sent a shockwave throughout the world. Some waves were bigger than others.



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When I got my second DUI, I cut a semi-trailer off merging into a construction zone, where I was rear ended. I went to jail as a result, for I wrecked the car that night, my girlfriend broke up with me that night and I was angry and depressed. That was as far as I had ever thought, how it affected *me*. What never occurred to me, was that due to the accident, the interstate was closed, traffic backed up, people had places to be, lives to live, and things to do, which my carelessness prevented them from doing that.

Oh, did I mention I damaged my mother's only car, the car she worked hard to purchase, and struggled to pay for each month? Still, my girlfriend and family were worried, not knowing where I was, was I alive, when I failed to show up on time, as well as not hearing from me. When I became a felon, the only thing I could think about was how that day hurt me, and how it had changed my life.

What I didn't think about was how painful it was for my mother to find her son dying from a drug overdose, how it emotionally it hurt her, when I had pushed her against the wall when I tried to run out of the house before the police came, how disrespected the police officer felt, how broken hearted my grandfather was, and how it hurt my family financially to post my bail or how going to jail with me would impact my girlfriend's future.

Until I came into the fellowship and worked the steps, I never realized how many people my alcoholism touched. What I also found out, is that my recovery has a ripple effect and touches many more



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people's lives than I will ever know. Every moment we spend in the program, the world is safer and a better place. Our way of living has its advantages for all.

Our recovery can allow people to find hope, to find solutions and to find a way to heal. Our recovery allows us to be useful, productive members of society, and more importantly, there's no limit to how far the ripple effects of practicing these principles can reach...

Your Brother in Recovery



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# Beauty In The Shadows

Franklin Heindricks – Outside Contributor

Take a look  
and imagine this  
how easy it is  
to get lost in the sickness  
not count the cost of this addiction  
and all its afflictions  
many sleepless nights, chasing the  
sunrise  
as my buzz peaks  
distorting my reality around me  
I can see my dreams  
As they surround me  
Paranoid delusions  
Window blinds illusions  
Shadows in the night tricked my  
mind  
Shadows in the light tricked my  
eyes  
Trapped behind closed eyes  
Needles and foil  
Glass pipes and Pyrex  
Waiting on the cook  
So I can cook my brain

and lungs and veins  
It's a downward spiral  
And I'm not ready to stop  
spinning  
Because when I do,  
I'll have to face the man I've  
become  
and the loved ones I've hurt



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# Potato Chip Addiction

Timothy Youngblood - Lawrence

Ever wonder why you can't stop snacking? Actually, you probably can, but I'm sure you've seen the TV documentaries about people who can't, even when they've grown to such a size that they're unable to leave the house. They know they need to stop. They want to stop, but they can't. Why not? Is it possible those people are literally addicted to food? Or are so-called 'food addicts' with no willpower?

What do you think?

I'm like an alcoholic, but for potato chips. From 1990 to 2023, individuals in custody who've met and conducted business with me, nicknamed me 'The Chip Man' because they thought I was addicted to them. I never thought I was, even though I'd give everyone I met—at least five people each commissary day—an extra \$5 of other food items in exchange for all the chips they were allowed to purchase. Today, I still eat a lot of potato chips and don't consider myself addicted to them.

Many experts agree that food addiction works the same way as any other addiction—cigarettes, alcohol, drugs, caffeine, etc. This may be surprising, but let's run through a checklist of addiction characteristics:

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- Loss of control
- Tolerance
- Withdrawal

Those who are food addicts meet the first, and probably most central criterion, loss of control. This description seems apt for those who continue to overeat, even past the point of becoming prisoners within their own homes. It's clear food addicts show tolerance. Nobody wakes up in the morning and decides to eat ten bags of chips. It's just eating one bag no longer satisfies that urge. Therefore, you eat another. Soon two bags aren't enough to satisfy that urge. So, you go on and on, increasing the amount (dose).

Withdrawal, on the other hand, is more controversial. Although food addicts don't experience the classic 'cold turkey' symptoms of anxiety, shaking, and a drop in body temperature (associated with heroin withdrawal), they certainly reported milder symptoms such as headaches and irritability (if you're a caffeine addict, you probably experience these symptoms when you miss your breakfast coffee).

In any case, although tolerance and withdrawal are symptoms of physical dependence, it's the behavioral aspect—the loss of control—which is generally regarded as most central to addiction.



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Not convinced? Perhaps you insist on similarities at a biological or genetic level. Well, both drugs & food stimulate the brain's reward system, just as anything else people enjoy: music, sex, shopping, or caring for your little kids. Both food & drug addiction aren't only heritable, they often run in the same families. So, the simple answer is, yes, food addiction is essentially just like drug addiction. What is addiction anyway? I'm intelligent enough to know that no one knows as much as they like to make you think they do. Officially, addiction no longer exists as a diagnosis.

The 2013 edition of the of *American Psychological Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-V)* dropped the term. Apparently, *it implied moral weakness. Although the manual now only lists 'disorders' (e.g.; alcohol use disorder, stimulant use disorder, gambling disorder, etc.), most researchers are still happy to use the term 'addiction'.*

I reiterate, what is addiction anyway? The prevailing view expressed by the American Psychiatric Association is addiction is a disease, just like asthma, diabetes and cancer. That the addict can no more will away their disease than a cancer patient can will away their tumor.

This doesn't seem quite right. Many addicts, even those who insist addiction is a disease such as an old acquaintance I won't name have been able to quit using, with no aid other than their own will power.



Motivation may be the key. Those who quit are usually those who want to the most. A few studies have gotten drug addicts to quit simply by paying them to do so. Money/Motivation. This obviously poses a problem for the idea that addiction is a disease, because no cancer patient could ever be cured by simply paying them money.

On this view, an addict is simply someone who places greater weight on short-term gains (satisfaction from those potato chips or a fentanyl hit), than long-term gains (physical & mental health and being able to fit out the front door). I took a college course on Juvenile Justice which explained people who did poorly on tests dealing with delayed gratification were more likely to become addicts of some outside stimuli. This isn't to say addicts only have themselves to blame. The tendency for this delay...discounting—like addiction itself—also seems to be hereditary. To at least some extent, people who prefer one marshmallow now to two later, or a drug now to good health later, were born that way.

This theory is obviously controversial, but if it's right, then both of the seemingly contradictory views set out at the start of this paper are right. On the one hand, food addiction is a 'proper' addiction, like drug addiction. On the other hand, all addicts are just people with—and perhaps been with—insufficient willpower to forgo short-term gains for long-term benefits.



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# Somebody Save Me

Jeff Kennedy - Kewanee

*"Somebody save me, me from myself. I've spent so long livin' in hell/They say my lifestyle is bad for my health, it's the only thing that seems to help/All of this drinkin' and smokin' is hopeless, but feels like it's all I need/Something inside of me's broken, I hold onto anything that sets me free/I'm a lost cause...don't waste your time on me/I'm so damaged beyond repair, life has shattered my hopes and my dreams."*

Those are the words from a song called "Save Me" by Jelly Roll. The message really resonates with me because I've cried similar words from my knees many times. I truly thought I was "damaged beyond repair" and there was no saving me. I'm an alcoholic and I have suffered from the disease of alcoholism for over 35 years.

The first 22 of those years were spent as a stumbling, slobbering, depressed, and full-fledged drunk. I've been locked up the last 13 years and completely abstinent.

*Abstinence* doesn't necessarily mean *sobriety*, and I'm never gonna be cured. I will likely struggle with sobriety the rest of my life.



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I cannot drink, **period!** One drink is *one too many* and one more is *never enough*. It's a life-or-death situation for drunks like me.

Now, you might be thinking, "this guy can't really be serious!" Well, without turning this into a novel, here's a quick, embarrassing synopsis of the last 38 years—I started drinking around the age of 17. By the time I was 20, I had already dropped out of college, because I couldn't make the A.M. classes, due to hangovers.

I joined the Air Force at that same age, basically to redeem myself in my parent's eyes. Over the next 3 years, I was arrested 3 separate times for D.U.I. on a military base and subsequently received a *bad conduct discharge*. I returned home, with my tail between my legs—my self-esteem and self-respect were very low.

Can you guess what I turned to for help? Yes, more and more alcohol. Most normal people might see those incidents as "major warning signs", and that change is needed. Oh no, not me, nothing changes if nothing changes, and things only got worse.

At 25, I was in a very dark place. My parents had been trying to help me get back on my feet, but eventually they had to put up with my B.S. for too long and they kicked me out. Later that year, during a moment of desperation and weakness, I took someone's life. A completely senseless murder that remained unsolved for 17 years.

It was during that timeframe that I really fell off the deep end. Once the fog in my head cleared, I understood committing that crime



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was completely out of character for me. Yes, I was a worthless drunk, but I've never been prone to violence. I just couldn't wrap my head around what I did. So, I self-medicated to numb the pain as I just wanted to die. I was depressed, I was disgusted with myself, and I became very paranoid.

Can you imagine the anxiety of always looking over your shoulder, every day for seventeen years? The whole ordeal was utterly eating me up inside, and I couldn't tell a soul why I was so depressed. I contemplated killing myself. Many times, I devised a plan and many times I chickened out because I was too much of a coward. I actually attempted suicide four times. Thankfully, by some divine intervention, I was unsuccessful. Basically, my life was *wash, rinse and repeat* for seventeen years. Oh, I also received four more D.U.I.'s during that period and I still didn't seek out help.

Fast forward—2010. I was so tired, tired of depression and the anxiety. I was ready to explode. So, after my fourth and final drunken suicide mission of which I purposely rolled a stolen truck off a ravine at nearly 100 mph during a high-speed chase, (I unbuckled my seat belt and rolled her, knowing it would end me. Did I say *divine intervention*?) I was thrown out on probably the first roll and was barely injured. My dad told me later, had I been buckled in, I would have been smashed by the cab (of the truck) and probably died.

I was released from the hospital, but my parents wanted to commit me for mental issues after I told them that the accident



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was intentional. It was at that moment I told them the truth. They almost immediately forgave me. We contacted a lawyer and after some intense conversations with the Illinois State Police (ISP), I finally came forward and confessed.

Oh my God, the weight was lifted and the burden diminishing from my heart, it was then I began a new journey. Don't get me wrong, I still hurt to this day, and I haven't forgiven myself completely. For the first time in my adult life, I could say, "I can be a new person" and "I don't have to drink anymore." My life is full of unconditional love from my parents, my kids, my extended family and my friends who truly believe in me.

I don't have anything to run from anymore. I am an alcoholic, and the opportunities and triggers are going to be ever-present in my life. I have so much to live for and I can't imagine one reason to throw it all away. My goal is to achieve complete sobriety, physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. I am a work in progress.

If (for whatever reason) you feel your life is meaningless, or you feel you're running from something, and you think drinking and/or drugging is the cure-all, I'm living proof that it is not! Please talk to someone, your life does have meaning. Get help and don't let that pain keep brewing. There's a bursting point, and you may not survive it. Thank you for allowing me to share a portion of my story. It was difficult to open up, but it's therapeutic for me and maybe, just maybe, it will touch someone's life. Wishing you all the love, peace and prosperity.



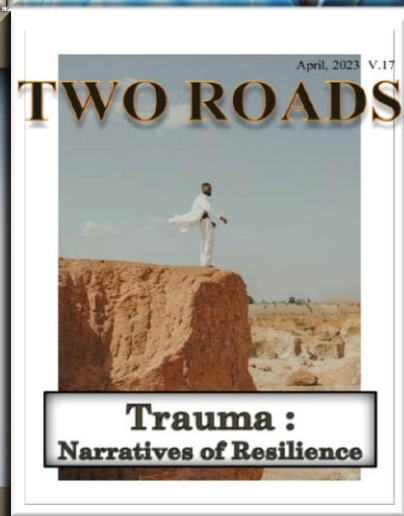
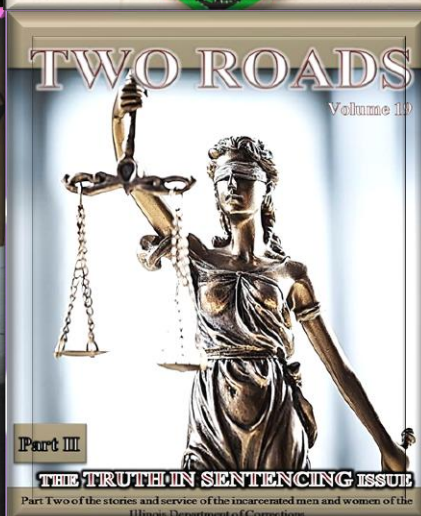
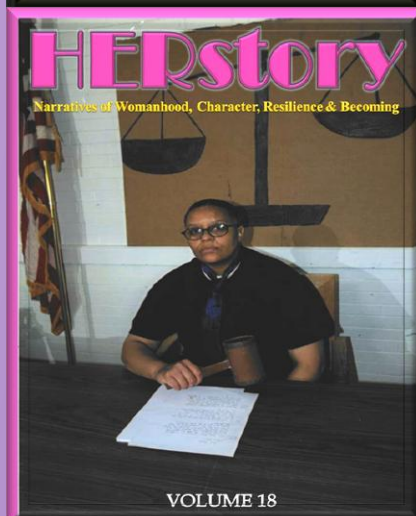
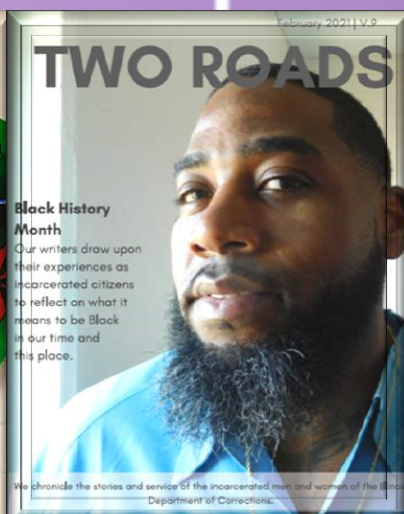
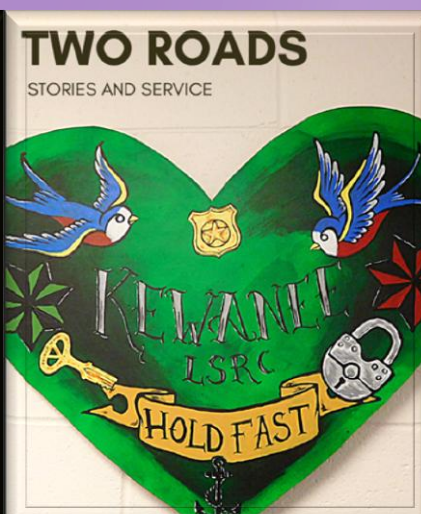
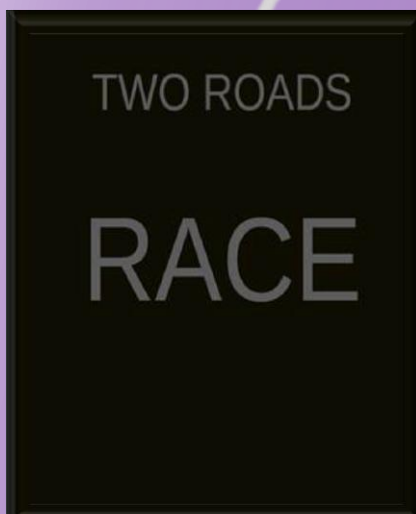
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# PSST... SPREAD THE WORD



Encourage your family, friends and  
others to take part!!

[idoc.illinois.gov/news/tworoadse-zine.html](http://idoc.illinois.gov/news/tworoadse-zine.html)

# I Know What It Is To Be Addicted

Edward Flores - Graham

I know what it's like to be addicted. I know what it's like to dream about failing. To want to stop disappointing the people who love me, but in the instance where I have to make the choice between doing the right thing and doing what satisfies. I make the wrong choices. I know what it's like to hate myself. There are so many people who want to tell me about myself, but nobody wants to help. Too many people think they have the answers, but no one seems to know the problem. My own mind is my worst enemy. The harder I try, the more I fail. So, why try at all? To everyone reading this, I've been to this place.

I really did try everything to change. I studied books on the brain, DNA, Biology, Chemistry, Psychiatry and Reprogramming. I even did a whole year of audio-hypnotherapy. We're talking about college level stuff. I honestly wanted to know what was wrong with my brain and how I could fix it. As a result, I just ended up really knowledgeable about addiction.

If I tried to tell you I beat my addiction, I'd be a liar. The truth is I grew up. I'd lay in my bed and pray to a God I didn't even believe in that I had failed—that I couldn't do it. Some people say all you need is a little faith. Well, I can tell you I didn't have any. Turns out, God doesn't need your faith. I spent over a year accusing, making excuses and

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feeling sorry for myself. One of the only people who'd still talk to me on the phone always brought up God and all it did was make me angry. Through the most random series of events, I ended up writing this Bible school in the middle of Covid lock down. I didn't even want the address, but it ended up at my bunk.

When I wrote them, I just wanted the Bible study. Somehow, I ended up enrolled in their college with tuition and book fees paid in full – not by me; I'm a state baby. I didn't have the right Bible, but within a week of receiving the first class, somebody gave me a brand-new Bible because he was going home. They didn't know me, nor did they know I was starting a Bible college class. They just walked up to me and said, "You look like you can use this." I don't think they were trying to compliment me. The same guy tried to fight me a month prior in the dayroom.

God had my attention. Some people try explaining away the peculiar way events connect in our lives by calling them coincidence. How many does it take to convince you? I'll tell you at this point I was still a skeptic, but I tried everything else. Nothing would please me more than to tell all those believers out there that I tried that already and it didn't work. But, for that to be I had to give it a genuine shot.

The first class said in order for the word of God to demonstrate any power in your life, you have to read it, and you have to believe what it says. That was asking a little too much of me in that moment, but here



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is what I did. I challenged God. I told him I'm going to read this every day for 365 days and if you cannot fix my brain, I have to look somewhere else. That was 5 years ago I'm still reading my Bible every day. This isn't an overnight fix. You won't magically stop having the urge to follow after that instant gratification.

You'll fall sometimes, but if you're genuine God is faithful and the strength to get up and keep fighting is in your hands. Reading the Bible won't make you popular, but if you allow it, it may change your perspective. I did what I could. I tried all options. I didn't succeed. But where I failed, God came through. Are you willing to give Him the opportunity to show you how you can trust him? I did, and now I am free!!!!



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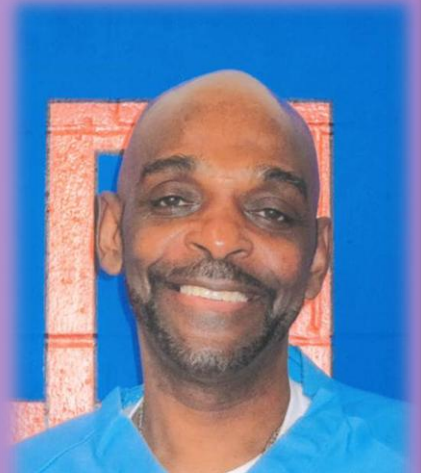
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# Celebrating My Recovery

To celebrate my recovery is, in fact, a celebration of my life. For without my recovery, I'd have no life! My name is Kelly Bennett and I've been working my recovery program since 2008, when I was first invited to an Alcohol Anonymous (A.A.) meeting at Hill C.C. (Galesburg). I've been incarcerated for over two decades but make no mistake; I was clean for several years before I began the process of *recovery*.

I learned that just to be "clean and sober" was not recovery...at least not in my life it wasn't. My consumption of alcohol and illegal drugs were only 10% of the issues that plagued my life. The other 90% was based on the way I handled things, such as my emotions, my thoughts and my behavior when life placed its vicissitudes in front of me.

You see, I suffered from alcoholism, as well as addiction and just being "clean and sober" was just part of the solution. The other part was developing a program of recovery suitable for me and my situation. That's why I'm truly grateful for my recovery and that celebration goes to God. The fellowship of A.A. and N.A. (Narcotics Anonymous), and most importantly



*Kelly 'KB' Bennett*  
TWO ROADS  
Associate Editor

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the host of supportive people I've been blessed to have in this life of recovery!!

To the legacy builders group, your wisdom carried me through some tough times. To the clinical department (Hill C.C.), you're the superheroes who saved my life, with your patience, encouragement, and insight. I'll forever be in your debt. Ms. Overton, Ms. Sharer and Mr. Patch, thank you! Thanks for being a godsend when I was faced with the weight of death, trauma and dealing with being incarcerated all at once. I celebrate you as I celebrate my recovery.

Thank you for all your fruits of labor that took me from the darkness into the light. I'm a *light worker* because of you all. Another valuable lesson I've learned during this process of recovery was I couldn't have done this alone. The fellowship and the many positive people I attached to and invited into my life will forever be one of the powers greater than myself!

Therefore, I celebrate you all for being a part of this process, which must be practiced daily in all my affairs. I do pray I've been just as much as a blessing to you all as you've been to me. I walk with my heart on my sleeve because I refuse to hide that which makes me the man I've grown to be proud of...sharing my experiences, strengths (weaknesses) and hope to all, one day at a time.

Celebrate today, as I celebrate my recovery.

Sincerely,

Mr. Kelly 'KB' Bennett

Grateful & Recovering



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# Q & A: Rachel Tucker

## Outside Contributor

### **What was your relationship with your brother?**

I loved him. Although he was living his toxic relationship (drugs) with my dad, and being in that life, I still tried to save him. Even at one time, I was willing to try and be a part of that life, but I was able to break the addiction and say “Nope”. It was an on-going struggle, which I have a lot of regrets from and a lot of *I wish I would have done this*, and *I wish I would have done that*.

### **Once you broke free of the addiction, what was next?**

Well, I had a kid and ended up getting engaged, which was on my brother’s birthday. I was making the calls to let people know and I called my dad’s sister to let her know, she told me “we’ve gotten word that your father is going to be arrested. He’s been under watch by the FBI for the past year and they’re coming to get him.”

### **How did that make you feel?**

You know, I don’t know that I had a lot of feelings, but I was under the “you get what you deserve” for how things were going on. I felt that “this may be the best way.” What’s crazy is, as toxic as their world was, they were each other’s family, and they were each other’s world...



## What about your brother?

When dad went away, it really rocked my brother's world. He had been in a serious car accident and dad was his caretaker. So, I could see how they were inseparable. Because of my dad's choices, this was the only person left that truly loved him, and now he was gone (to prison). My brother ended up dying later that year. I would say that it was because of a broken heart.

## So, what led you to become closer to your father?

I learned after my brothers passing, he would give anything for his drug family. He would give his last dollar to them or drugs if they were going through it. If they were released from jail, he was "the father figure" for so many people, albeit that he was in that life, I learned that he cared for people, although that was not the same with me growing up. I just wasn't sure if he cared for me. He would tell me thank you and send cards, but I wasn't sure if it was real, or he wanted something?

## When did it click?

Holy cow! I got a call on a Tuesday from the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) letting me know that my father qualified for the *First Step Act* and that he was being let out the very next day. I asked one of the counselors there "Can you just keep him?" "No." was the reply. The very next day, here he was, with a walker and a box full of pills. That was it. That is what 57 years of life had given him...

*\*\*You will find her in the next month's edition, Viewpoints Volume 25*



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# The Cost of Having an Addiction

Chad 'Cartoon' Combs - Kewanee

I've struggled with addiction my whole life. The prison sentences have gotten longer and longer. The one thing I didn't realize was in my addiction, everyone suffers—not just me when the judge hands out a prison sentence—my wife and children are sentenced as well.

Addiction for me is tricky. You could hook me up to a lie detector test and ask, "Will you ever get high again?", and when I answer "No", I'll pass with flying colors. In my heart, I don't want to get high again. Unfortunately, it takes more than heart, love, family, and an education. Willingness is not enough. "Just don't get high again" or as Nancy Reagan once put it, "Just say no!" ...sounds easy, and it sounds good rolling off the tongue. Just like that Everlast song "What's it like?", until you've walked a mile in my shoes.

It's easy for a skinny person to tell someone who's overweight to lose weight. It's simple for a vegetarian to tell someone to not eat meat. It's easy for someone without an addiction to tell them to *stop using*. The cost of having an addiction has definitely outweighed the reward. Alienation from my family was the highest price paid. I have two daughters who want nothing to do with me. I've missed memories with all four of my children; birthdays, anniversaries and weddings. All the way down to the small things.



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Just my children knowing they have a strong father who they can always come to. A wife who knows she doesn't have to take on the world alone. I forfeited all of that. It wasn't taken from me, I gave it all away.

The things I know today: I know I don't have it all figured out; I know I have to stay vigilant because I can be doing the best I ever have, and my addiction is waiting in the shadows looking for the perfect opportunity; I know it's going to take a team. I've proven I can't do it alone. In addition, I know Recovery for me is lifelong. I don't want to do this anymore. My family and I deserve better. Many things run through my head. I wish addiction, drug abuse and incarceration weren't there. I wish it wasn't even a thought or a worry. I'm glad that today I realize and recognize it has to be at the forefront of my life. I have to stay on top of it.

Chad "Cartoon" Combs



**RECOVERY IS POSSIBLE.**  
Help is Available.

-  SAMHSA's National Helpline  
1-800-662-HELP (4357)
-  Substance Use Treatment Locator  
[findtreatment.gov](http://findtreatment.gov)
-  Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator  
[findtreatment.samhsa.gov](http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov)

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# The Sailboat

*"I am not afraid of storms for I am learning how to sail my ship."* -  
Louisa May Alcott

This quote beautifully summarizes what can be considered the most important practical aim of positive psychology: enhancing autonomy and resilience. The goal of every helping professional is to eventually become redundant by helping the client to both realize that he/she is the captain of his/her own ship and act accordingly. More precisely, the realization that he/she is the only one who can change his/her own behavior and reality allows the client to behave in line with personal values and take responsibility for his/her own actions.

A key step in this process is the development of a balanced and complete perspective on the self: a perspective that takes into consideration the many factors that determine daily behavior and experiences, both positive and negative, controllable and uncontrollable. By becoming aware of personal strengths and weaknesses, of factors that can be controlled and those that are beyond control, of positive and negative social forces, autonomy is facilitated. By comparing human functioning to a sailboat and its journey, this tool offers a multi-faceted, yet easy to understand perspective on the self.

Provided by [www.positivepsychologyprogram.com](http://www.positivepsychologyprogram.com)



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# Overcoming

## Darnell Wright - Vandalia

I'm an 'N' number individual in custody and am truly disappointed with being again confined within IDOC, truly because my reason is greatly due to continuing to me being around, and involved with, substance abuse (crack, cocaine and alcohol) and the various lifestyles and endeavors which seem to accompany.

I offer this slightest of words of hopeful encouragement, for any who are involved with ADDICTION—**You can overcome it!** I allowed this confinement—this re-incarceration, this relapse—to be truly what it is. Fact, I'm making very poor choices. I'm blessed that this occasion, God met me at its beginning. For, I know His plan has always been better for me than my plans and choices of substance abuse. My words for today are: Believe, Receive, and Apply. Many great moments of service and enlightenment for everyone.

I wish to offer a shout out of gladness for the creation of this particular avenue of communication. This forum is a great opportunity for those who are by some means entwined around the thorns of incarceration. So, my grateful thanks! In addition, as to this **TWO ROADS Addiction** opportunity, I viewed the callout within a posted bulletin and was inspired by the platform, which I decided to respond.



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# Rock, Paper, Scissors Deliverance

'Ray' - Sheridan

I'm here today and drug free by the grace of God who delivered me from a crack addiction in 1987. God has put it on my heart to give this testimony, because if the Lord could save me, he could save anyone!

My story started when I got my very first apartment, moving from the suburbs back to the city. Although I rented a studio, I worked 2-3 jobs and also was full time student. My addiction became a choice because residents of the court way building I was a resident in offered to smoke crack free of charge. Having experimented with our drugs in high school, I thought I could handle crack too. Boy was I wrong.

Although I didn't buy any rocks, the addiction was so strong in 3 months I had lost all my jobs and dropped out of community college, although I was on the honor roll. Next when I couldn't make car payments, the car got towed. With no money to pay rent for my girlfriend and newborn, I was one week away from being homeless. I had reached rock bottom, having lost all my meager belongings.

MY spiritual awakening began when a Christian woman with a station wagon offered to move me for free, Eventually I would go to church with her and repented for backsliding because I had been raised at churches even if I only went on Sundays.



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I titled this story because I've told you about the Rock, Now let me tell you about the Paper, which was the Holy Bible, As I read the Spirit led me to scriptures in Deuteronomy Chapter 32 called the Song of Moses (Deut. 31-30) That those who overcome this world will sing in heaven Revelations 15-3.

Overcoming addictions from drugs begins when we realize that people who sell you drugs are called *sorcerers* in the Bible by bewitching you into idol worship (Acts8:11) . When we are taken out of our relationship with God, we experience a form of insanity. Crack makes people do all kinds of evil that under normal circumstances they wouldn't do. A crack addict can't help themselves, because the dopamine (the pleasure center) has been hijacked and never gets turned off, which means you need a spiritual deliverance from the sorcerer. The Greek word *Pharmakeus* is where we get the English word *pharmacy* or *druggist* from(Rev.18:23).

The problem with addiction is we don't realize we worship another God , The Lord God is supposed to be our Rock (Deut.32- 4), When Israel left Egypt in the book of Exodus, some decided to build a golden calf (exodus 32:8). But Deut. 32:17 says, "They sacrificed to devils, not to God. For their rock is not our Rock" (Deut. 32-31). Notice the lower case and upper case "R" in Rock, the people who put their trust in a rock is the God they worship (Deut,32: 37) All drugs are controlled by demons. Just look at a bottle of whiskey – you'll see the word spirits on on the label. The Apostle Paul alludes to this in Corinthian 10:20 saying that the gentiles sacrifice to devils...and you should have no fellowship

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with demons.

Before learning all this I prayed for God to deliver me because I could not stop smoking crack and the urge, went away. This is a powerful testimony because whenever I preached this message to a cellmate that had sold drugs; they usually did not believe me. My response “you haven’t seen the power of God at work in your life ‘but I have. Don’t get me wrong I was tempted a plethora of times but I never again succumbed to that urge, because God use his spiritual scissors to cut that drug loose. Hence the title Rock, Paper, Scissors but this is not a game. The war on drugs begins in the battlefield of the mind.

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## Why Hispanic Heritage Month starts in the middle of September

National Hispanic Heritage Month begins Friday September 15th and will run through October 15, giving the United States an opportunity to recognize and celebrate members of our communities and their ancestors who hail from Mexico, parts of the Caribbean, Central and South America and Spain.

### The History

Rather than starting at the beginning of September, Hispanic Heritage Month takes place over 30 days starting on the 15th – a nod to the anniversaries of national independence for a number of Latin American countries: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua all recognize September 15 as the date of their independence, while Mexico's independence is celebrated September 16 and Chile celebrates its independence September 18.

Hispanic Heritage Month traces its history to 1968, when the observance was just a week long. President Lyndon B. Johnson signed a bill designating the week of September 15 as "National Hispanic Heritage Week," according to the *Office of the Historian and the Office of Art & Archives for the US House of Representatives*. "It was a demand for greater inclusion and representation and acknowledgment that Latinos play an important role in the United States," he said. It wasn't until nearly 20 years later that Hispanic Heritage Week was lengthened to an entire month under President Ronald Reagan.





The contributions of Hispanics and Latinos to the United States are long and storied: Emily Key (director of the education at the Smithsonian) pointed out that the first known colony in America was not Jamestown, but the Spanish colony of St. Augustine in Florida.

The *2020 US Census* showed that Hispanics and Latinos make up a fast-growing, multiracial group: In 2020, 62.1 million people identified as Hispanic or Latino – 18% of the US population. That number had grown 23% since 2010. Comparatively, the US population not of Hispanic or Latino origin grew just 4.3%, census data shows. Between 2010 and 2020, just over half of the total US population growth – 51.1% – was due to growth among Hispanics or Latinos, per the Census Bureau.



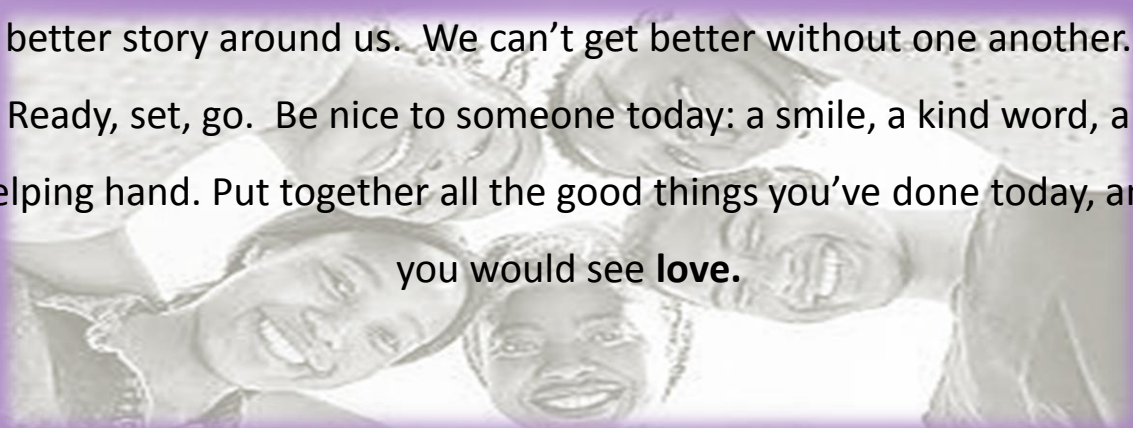
**HAPPY HISPANIC HERITAGE  
MONTH FROM TWO ROADS**

# Together is Better



*LaKisha Woodard*  
TWO ROADS  
Newest Associate Editor

My fellow peers, let's escape together. Let's take one another's hand and pull one another up. Let us have compassion for others. Let us hold one another in our hearts even when we don't know their names. We got work to do, and we can get it done together. Put your hand in my hand and together we can make it. Let's shape a better place for us our future, our children, our communities. Let's write a better story around us. We can't get better without one another. Ready, set, go. Be nice to someone today: a smile, a kind word, a helping hand. Put together all the good things you've done today, and you would see **love**.



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# The Origins of the “Pharmaceutical Theory of Addiction”

Michael Stone – Illinois River

According to the above theory and every government funded scientist that promotes it, it is the chemical hooks within the drugs that are the cause of addiction. Most importantly was the fact that, this theory developed from the evidence observed in a series of rat experiments. They even made a commercial for it during the crack (cocaine) epidemic that ran alongside other commercials that expressed, “Just say no”, “This is your brain on drugs”, and “Crack Is Whack!”

These rats were placed in a cage by themselves- it was nothing they could do, they didn’t have no toys, no running wheels, no loved ones, friends, or nothing they could build healthy bonds with, so they developed a social and psychological isolation through **manufactured consent**. But what was in the cage was a cocaine water bottle. The rat drunk the cocaine water until it killed him or until he killed himself through... manufactured consent.

Jahanni Hari, author of “Chasing the Scream”, was able to contact this expert by the name of Bruce Alexander. Dr. Bruce was one of these experts who genuinely wanted to help people and find solutions for those suffering from things like addiction.



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When Dr. Bruce re-examined those experiments, he noticed that the experts then-created or manufactured an environment or condition that left the rats no choice but to take the drugs. So, according to Hari, Dr. Bruce asked himself, “What if the experiment was ran differently?” Dr. Bruce, along with some of his colleagues built two environments. The first one was the original environment that shaped the pharmaceutical theory of addiction. The other one was built like a park, and it was like a Kewanee for rats. It had plywood walls, the running wheels, colored balls they could play with, good food and other rats to build healthy bonds with.

Healthy bonds were formed in this environment, and they called it “Rat Park”. The rats in both environments had access to a pair of drinking bottles, one bottle contained only water and the other bottle contained morphine. “An opiate that rats process in a similar way to humans and behaves just like heroin when it enters their brain”, wrote Hari.

At the end of each day, they would weigh the bottles to see how much of what they chose to drink in each environment. The rats in confinement drank up to 25-milligrams, but the rats in rat park used less than 5-milligrams. Now, I can imagine that after they tasted it and experienced the effects of it, they never went back to it.

Dr. Bruce stated:

**“These guys (in rat park) have a complete total twenty-four-hour supply of morphine, and they don’t use it.”**



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I conclude that maybe they stopped using it because they had other important things to do with their time and the drugs probably stopped them from fully enjoying those healthier activities every day. “So, the old experiments were, it seemed, wrong. It isn’t the drug that causes the harmful behavior-it’s the environment. As Dr. Bruce puts it, he was realizing that addiction isn’t a disease. Addiction is an adaptation. “It’s not you-it’s the cage you live in,” wrote Jahanni Hari. The same thing can be said about mental illness, violence, criminality, etc.

So, they keep tweaking the experiment to show and prove how much environment shapes your “chemical compulsions” or any compulsions towards detrimental behavior. They took the rats in Rat Park and put them in Restrictive Housing and observed them drink the morphine solution for 57-days, then they put the addicted rats in Rat Park. Over time, they noticed the addicted rats, in a healthier environment going through withdrawal, and in no time, they stopped drinking the morphine water in Rat Park.

“A happy social environment, it seemed, freed them of their addiction. In Rat Park, Dr. Bruce writes, “Noting that we tried instilled a strong appetite for morphine or produced anything that looked to us like addiction.” The rats in solitary confinement and the addicts in Vietnam weren’t being “hijacked” by the chemicals at hand, they were trying to cope with being dislocated from everything that gave their lives meaning and pleasure. The world around them had become an unbearable place to be- so when they couldn’t get out of it mentally.



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After learning all this, Dr. Bruce was beginning to develop a theory-one that radically contradicted our earlier understanding of addiction but seemed to him the only way to explain all this evidence. If your environment is like Rat Park- a safe, happy, community with lots of healthy bonds and pleasurable things to do- you will not be especially vulnerable to addiction [mental illness, violence, criminality, etc.]. If your environment is the rat cages-where you feel alone, powerless, - and purposeless- you will be.” Jahanni Hari

After this discovery, Dr. Bruce thought that he was going to get a “ticker tape parade”, but instead, the project got shut down because the money that funded the experiments through the university mysteriously cut off. The project was disregarded like it never happened.

When asked about how this affected him, he simply said that it was crazy, “That evidence like this can be so completely disregarded-it’s amazing. I suppose you could say it’s poisoned my entire outlook on life.” It poisoned his entire outlook on life because he realized, like everybody else that walked this path—that the only ones in power wanted it like it was, while not appearing to.



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# Religion ~~X~~. 12-Step Recovery

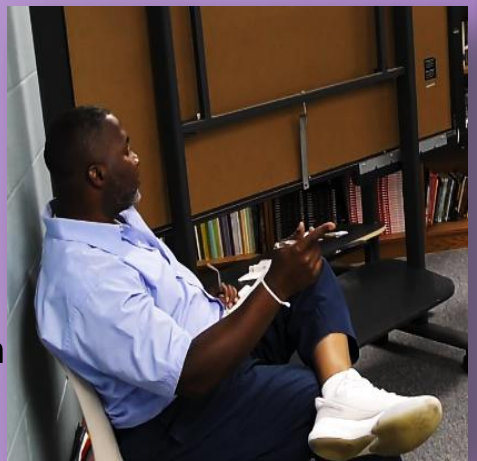


I'm an addict, though a recovered addict, but an addict, nonetheless. I suffer from the disease of addiction. Addiction is a progressive, chronic and potentially fatal disease, not a moral deficiency, which has several symptoms. A chief characteristic and symptom of the illness, and probably the most problematic, is the disease tells you that you don't have it.

Imagine someone who's diagnosed with Cancer and responds to their potentially deadly condition like, "Cancer, what cancer? I'm straight. You got the problem!" So, getting to the point where I can acknowledge my affliction, publicly and more importantly within my own "self," is a game changing step toward recovery in and of itself.

I won't give you a play-by-play of the horrors of my addiction. However, it suffices to say I've seen some things I hope you'll never see, and I've had some experiences and have done some things I pray you'll never experience.

However, since I've embarked on the path towards recovery, I've experienced a more personal and intimate relationship with The Power who could do for me (recover) what



*Keith 'Aquil' Talley*  
Senior Editor  
TWO ROADS



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I couldn't do for myself – Allah. This wonderful and welcomed development prompted some complicated feelings.

For starters, I began to question how I was experiencing such spiritual progress through a path other than Al-Islam, and what does that mean? Was my chosen faith path inadequate, deficient or incomplete? Was my personal faith lacking and insincere? Additionally, I began to experience a subtle sense of shame at my committed participation with our 12-step recovery group.

You see, being a Muslim is such a big part of my social identity, that I began to wonder if others also perceived my need for a supplemental path to achieve wellness as evidence of my religion's or my personal faith's lack of legitimacy.

As I said, those feeling were just honest, yet subtle observations, and over time, through prayer, reflection and the Grace of Allah, I came to embrace a better understanding of what I was experiencing and would eventually reconcile the relationship between my religion and my membership within a 12-step recovery community.

Today, I'm grateful to have both paths in my life. Addiction is a disease, not a moral problem! And just like being diagnosed with any other disease would justifiably prompt the afflicted to seek out someone equipped with the specialized knowledge to help them recover, the 12 steps of recovery outline a **process** by which



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those who uniquely suffer from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body can recover. My religion, or shall I say, "Way of Life," provides me with the guidance on how to carry out that process in a way that's in harmony and consistent with my faith's teachings.

I'm thankful I have hope and a path forward to forge a self-directed future of purpose, happiness and freedom. Who knew? You can save your ass and your soul at the same time.



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**21 DAYS TO MAKE A HABIT:**  
 IN THREE TEENY TINY WEEKS, I WILL START: \_\_\_\_\_

ACCOUNTABILITY: \_\_\_\_\_

**THIS IS IMPORTANT TO ME BECAUSE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**GOOD HABIT** ↑

**I CAN DO IT BECAUSE:**  I AM AWESOME.  I HAVE HELP.  
 I DESERVE THIS.  NO CHOICE.

**MOTIVATION CHECK:** [THE MAKE A GOOD HABIT MOTIVATION SCALE:]

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>MEH. WHATEV.</b>		<b>I MIGHT BE READY.</b>		<b>EYE OF THE TIGER.</b>
CRUMPLE THIS PAPER AND CARRY ON.		TRY AGAIN WHEN YOU ARE MORE MOTIVATED.		GO FORTH AND FRIKKIN' CONQUER!

**WHEN I WANT TO GIVE UP, I WILL:** \_\_\_\_\_

**COUNT DOWN THE DAYS TO SUCCESS:**

<input type="checkbox"/> TWENTY-ONE	<input type="checkbox"/> EIGHTEEN	<input type="checkbox"/> FIFTEEN	<input type="checkbox"/> TWELVE	<input type="checkbox"/> NINE	<input type="checkbox"/> SIX	<input type="checkbox"/> THREE
<input type="checkbox"/> TWENTY	<input type="checkbox"/> SEVENTEEN	<input type="checkbox"/> FOURTEEN	<input type="checkbox"/> ELEVEN	<input type="checkbox"/> EIGHT	<input type="checkbox"/> FIVE	<input type="checkbox"/> TWO
<input type="checkbox"/> NINETEEN	<input type="checkbox"/> SIXTEEN	<input type="checkbox"/> THIRTEEN	<input type="checkbox"/> TEN	<input type="checkbox"/> SEVEN	<input type="checkbox"/> FOUR	<input type="checkbox"/> ONE

**MY REWARD:** \_\_\_\_\_



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# This Love Hurts

Franklin Heindricks – Outside Contributor

A warm push in the veins, as this medicine hits my brain,  
Pure bliss as I nod in and out of this coma.

My whole life has been a bad omen  
everything I ever owned was stolen.

I am possessed by this demon, she leaves me feenin,  
I am out of control no sense can be made of my decisions.

I'm only gonna do what's gonna get me my next fix,  
And keep me from being sick.

Ain't it crazy how when we don't have dope, we call it being sick,  
And when we do we say we are well.

What kind of twisted hell have we created

If you can relate our destiny are fixed, we failed for the bait,  
Thought the dope was our savior.

Sad part is we should not have needed saving not loved enough; never  
felt we were enough hoping someone tells us we were

Till we give up saying we've had enough we just want to be loved  
But if you don't love yourself, you'll never accept it.



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# A Journey to a New Life

Bob W. – Outside Contributor

When I think about recovery with the perspective of my experience, it is a look back with the understanding that I have today. My experience has been with a 12-step program, which I would describe as a journey.

I have to go back to a point in my early exposure to the disease of Alcoholism/Addiction. Looking back, I can see the situation differently, but what was that “magic” ingredient that allowed me to have that “moment of clarity”, that allowed me to not only to see my true state of addiction, as described to me through the experiences of others and some of the literature I had been presented with.

It amounted to the realization that no matter how much I wanted/needed to believe that somehow, I was going to gain control over my drinking; I obviously wasn't able to and more importantly wasn't ever going to be able to on my own. The dilemma that remained was that I couldn't conceive of a life without drinking.

Somehow after hearing a speaker tell of his sponsor having returned to drinking after being sober for 25 years, I had a “moment of clarity” in which I was able to see and believe that I was an alcoholic and was not ever going to be able to control my drinking. This was not necessarily a comforting thought, although it had a profound and critical impact on



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me. I often think of the phrase “we stood at the turning point”. This was for me a crucial realization. Although this experience was vital in what was to come, it was not enough in itself, as it was only a realization but without a course forward.

At this point, I was in a limbo-like state of not knowing what lay ahead except the certainty of drinking again, with its familiar consequences. I started listening and paying more attention to the people, I had come in contact with, and to realize that they had a solution to their alcoholism and that it was something I would like to have. They assured me that they too had felt as I did but had put the process of working the steps of this program into action with the results being what I was observing.

I had to weigh the information I had, both to my situation and the willingness to attempt this program of action. It took both of those components together for me to decide to honestly, to the best of my ability, to make a commitment to try this process. As I proceeded along this program of action I slowly started to see and feel differently (usually in retrospect) and was carried along from one step to the next all the while gaining more faith in both the program and the power, which underlies the transformation, which is “recovery from a hopeless state of mind and body”.

A lot of time has passed and as I have been able to use this “design for living” as my guide. As a result, I have been able to find a life beyond my imagination, a journey that proceeds “one day at a time”. I am so grateful for this gift that I did not deserve but was given freely.



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# TWO ROADS

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[idoc.illinois.gov/news/tworoadse-zine.html](http://idoc.illinois.gov/news/tworoadse-zine.html)

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## Volume 24

THE ADDICTION  RECOVERY ISSUE

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