

# THE CONNECTION

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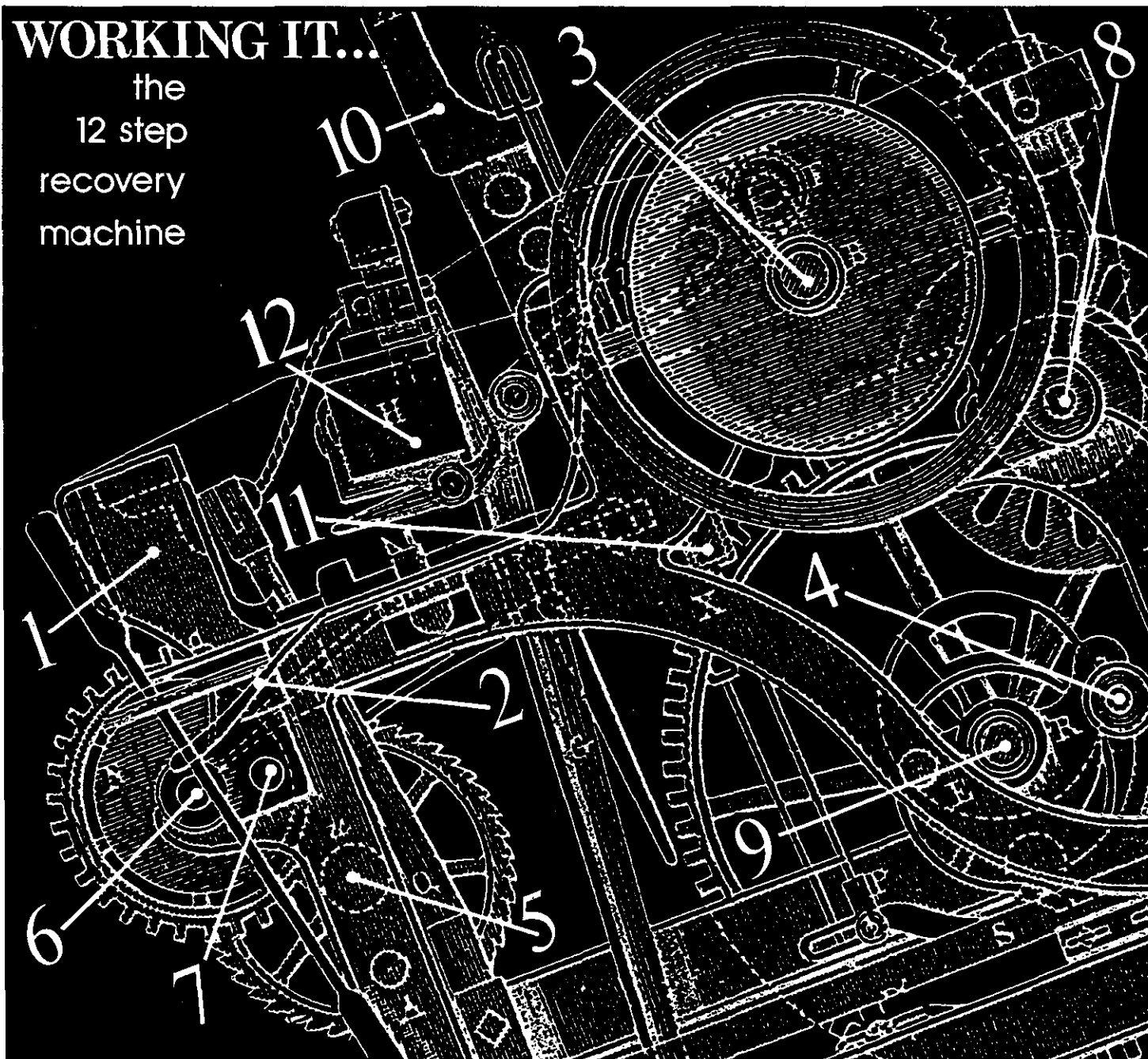
Volume IV, No. 3

EXPERIENCE, STRENGTH, AND HOPE WORLDWIDE  
OF AND BY THE MEMBERSHIP OF COCAINE ANONYMOUS

Spring 1990

## WORKING IT...

the  
12 step  
recovery  
machine



Published by Cocaine Anonymous  
World Services Office  
3740 Overland Avenue, Suite 6  
Los Angeles, CA 90034

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## FROM THE EDITOR

Yeah! Get on down wit' you' bad self!!! I be here, you be there and, get it, we all be clean and sober!! Yeah buddy!!

Enough of this foolery. Still, Susie, still an addict, and still here as your grateful, fun-loving, spiritual, totally into recovery Editor. I love that we are getting submissions from all over!!! I want more!! Do you understand? MORE!!! You know? Can you relate? Can you write? Poems, letters, stories, cartoons.

Next issue theme:  
TOTALLY CLEAN!!  
Let me hear from you!!

*It works,  
if you  
work it.*

## CHECKING IN ON

# WORKING IT

### Quiet Service

Here in Connecticut this past May was designated "Drug and Alcohol Awareness Month." In Stamford a youth drug abuse prevention group sponsored a production and invited Cocaine Anonymous to set up a display table in the school lobby with information about our group. On May 5, B. and I traveled in the pouring rain with a backseat full of C.A. literature.

Unfortunately, perhaps due to the inclement weather, few people showed up and I felt disconsolate thinking about all those addicts out there missing out on our table of promises. There were some passers-by who checked out our literature and representatives

from a local shelter helped themselves to our various pamphlets. If we only helped one addict that night it was well worth the hours spent there.

At the end of the night B. and I left. Leaving behind literature for the next day's team to man the display. It was a quiet night. No one was screaming for help, but our effort counted anyway.

In September we hope to further spread the message in Norwalk, CT at an annual festival. CA will be there for those who want to know more about the destructive disease and the recovery that is possible.

L.S. District 1, CT

### In Loving Memory

There were those among us in the rooms who asked for proof of the existence of a Higher Power. The fact that we were alive today was not enough. We wanted more.

God never said we asked for too much, He lovingly gave us T. For six wonderful years he carried the message in a gentle voice we could hear (and we could listen) and was present in a (large and huggable) body we could see and touch.

T. practiced the principles of this program in all his affairs. He was never too busy for anyone, reached out to the newcomer, and had a smile and great big bear-hug for all who walked alongside him on this path of sobriety. He stressed the importance of the

Steps as the way to change; he began a Third and Eleventh Step workshop to help us improve our conscious contact with our Higher Powers. He shared love, hope and joy with all he came in contact with every day of his sober life, and he did this gently and with God's grace.

We remember T. smiling, even through our tears. We'll miss you, but your spirit lives on in our meetings, in our Conventions, and in every sober sunrise and sunset. We love you lots and lots (parking lots, bagels and lox...)

Thanks for letting me share, and if The Connection makes it to heaven, T. is smiling right now.

A.D. Davies, CT

**FASTER** **STRONGER**  
 Stronger **BETTER** Faster *Better*  
**BETTER** *stronger* *faster* **STRONGER** *faster*  
*becomes happy, joyous and free!*

**I**t took me about a year of sobriety before I really understood why I used drugs. I used because I couldn't stand to feel my feelings — at least not the bad feelings. Not pain or loss or sorrow or rejection or grief or inadequacy. It took me about a year to feel all that stuff as deeply as I did when I was young, and now I know why I anesthetized those feelings. They stink!

Mine wasn't an alcoholic family, but we were drug addicts from the jump. Respectable, middle-class, drug addicts. The kind that reached for an allergy pill instead of a handkerchief, for a valium instead of a glass of warm milk. We were a family of symptom-treaters, and there were always symptoms. When as a teenager, I was unhappy with my 'puppy-fat,' I got a prescription for diet pills. In college I took half again as many units as necessary then did speed to cram for exams (any other over-achievers out there?).

Cocaine was the perfect drug for me. It made me faster, stronger, better. I was skinny, vivacious, sparkling in wit. Maybe it even worked for a while. Eventually I was a blotchy-skinned nervous wreck, whose fluorescent red nose dripped all the time, haggard and incapable of simple conversation. Gradually I shut myself from the world wanting nothing but a reliable dealer.

I felt nothing. It was great. Except I was dying. I was already spiritually and emotionally dead, physically was coming up close behind.

Of course I didn't believe any of that was a result of using cocaine on a daily basis. I thought maybe I had an underactive thyroid. Maybe I had cancer. Maybe I had some exotic stress-related disorder and just needed the right pill to treat my symptoms. The doctor took one look at me and said, "You're a cocaine addict," and prescribed CA meetings and a bottle of vitamins.

**"Cocaine was the perfect drug for me. It made me faster, stronger, better."**

The first meeting I went to I remember coming home and telling my boyfriend that they wanted me to go to nine meetings in nine days (maybe someone mumbled, maybe my ears were just full of cotton). "It seems rather excessive," I thought. What they could do in nine meetings, I was sure, I could do in four. After all, hadn't I completed college in two and a half years? Faster, stronger, better.

I thought I was too smart for this program for quite a while. I didn't stay sober either. It was a big get to realize that a lifetime of always being right was worthless, that the only 'right' was what was learned from sober experience — my own or someone else's.

Today I am teachable. I spent lots of years telling, instead of asking. Look where it got me.

Today I'm a healthy specimen, physically. Emotional and spiritual growth is slower. Some days

the best I can do is trust the process and do the footwork. Some days the best faith I have is the faith that I will have faith, because I have seen it in others. They say you can't feel self-pity and gratitude at the same time. I've found that to be true. Nothing in my life has changed on the outside (yet) but the one thing that has changed is my attitude, and it's the only thing that has to change.

Happy, joyous, and free — that's what we're promised. I was told that happiness is a state of mind, a conscious choice. Most of the time I remember to make that choice.

Free comes from the steps. Step five is freedom, and step nine is freedom. No other shoe to fall, ever. I never have to worry that I am going to be found out, because I have nothing to hide. That's free.

Joyous — well, I'm just getting an inkling of that. I think joyous comes from a conscious contact with a power greater than myself. Maybe it's a synergy of the warmth of the fellowship, the fulfillment of being of service and the choice to be happy and free. Maybe it's just being alive one more day, and allowing that day to hold unlimited hope and promise.

You know what? Feelings like this I don't need to anesthetize.

*A Grateful Addict, Los Angeles, CA*

## SPONSORSHIP

The Big Book doesn't use the word sponsor specifically, but gives a general description on page 18:

*"...the ex-problem drinker (user) who has found this solution, who is properly armed with the facts about himself, can generally win the entire confidence of another alcoholic (addict) in a few hours. Until such understanding is reached, little or nothing can be accomplished..."*

And,:

*"...that the person who is making the approach has had the same difficulty, that he obviously knows what he is talking about, that his whole deportment shouts at the new prospect that he is a person with a real answer, that he has no attitude of holier than thou, nothing whatever except the sincere desire to be helpful; that there are no dues or fees to pay, no axes to grind, no people to please, no lectures to be endured — these are the conditions we have found to be most effective. After such an approach many take up their beds and walk again."*

When I first came to the program in 1985 I was told that a sponsor was a person with time in the program that you called whenever things were good or bad that you could dump your feelings on and that this person would put a band-aid on your pain and give you answers, a temporary fix, in the hopes that you won't get loaded.

Now I use the above statements from the Big Book instead to ask myself: is this me? Is this my sponsor? Is my sponsor armed with the facts about him/herself? The answers are within you and your experience.

H.H. Compton, CA.

Are  
you  
a



# Compulsive Overthinker?

Do you ever think more than you plan to?

Have you ever lost time from work do to thinking?

Does your thinking ever cause problems with your spouse or family?

Do you find yourself depressed, guilty, or remorseful after thinking?

Do you experience headaches due to thinking?

Do you experience financial troubles due to thinking?

Have you ever lied or misled those around you as to how often or how much you think?

Do you go through periods where your thinking increases?

Have you ever tried to quit thinking, and found yourself unable to do so?

Have your friends or family ever suggested that you have a problem with thinking?

(If you have answered yes to between two and four of the above questions, you probably have a problem with over-thinking. If you have answered yes to more than four you definitely have a problem. Welcome to the alcoholic/addict mind! You're in the right place.)

# INSIDE

# STORY

**I was over 35  
the first time  
I ever saw  
cocaine...**

I simply did not know anyone that used it, where to get it, or even what the effects would be. Alcohol was fine as a relaxant, a social adjunct, but I didn't drink if I was going to drive or if I was responsible for anyone else's safety.

That's what I was like — responsible, a little uptight. I had been married, but I did not really relate well to people, and preferred to spend my spare time reading, gardening, or with my pets. I justified it by thinking that other people were less intelligent, not interested in deep thinking, or just boring.

At one point though, through a boyfriend, I met F. A mover and a shaker, he had risen from his blue-collar roots to drive a red Bentley and dine at the best restaurants. As an investment I lent F. half my savings to share in the excitement of his wheelings and dealings.

His descent into bankruptcy and alcoholism was rapid. Within two months of borrowing my money he'd lost everything, and could not, of course, pay me back. He sweetly scraped up twenty dollars or so every time I was ready to strangle him, and I began driving to his house each day for a handout of my own money. He always offered vodka (which I declined as I was driving) and then, more and more frequently, small lines of cocaine.

I don't remember the first time I bought cocaine. It was all quite casual. Always a weekend thing and for special occasions.

The occasions stopped being special, but the coke remained. The price was reasonable; it was painless, fun, and gave that little extra feeling of being...in the know. And unlike hard drugs, cocaine was not addicting...

After a year, my boyfriend and I were using more, and things started changing. People started coming over the house, guys he knew from Vietnam, home boys. They didn't stay long, often coming by more than once a day (I will not say he was selling, that's his story; I made sure I was out of the room when these people were over). Tempers were short and the lines got longer.

---

**"The hard way  
of turning it over  
is becoming  
the easy way."**

---

At its worst, I could not refuse even the lousiest product, the kind that smelled like hubcaps and left a greasy residue on the mirror, and gave, not a lift, but an instant headache. I became adept at stealing from my boyfriend's stash. I was willing to go through withdrawals every Sunday, so I wouldn't miss work, but my efficiency was decreasing.

I would quit for days or weeks, even months at a time, and be irritable, self-righteous and sarcastic. Each relapse was quickly blamed on my boyfriend's inability to shake off his habit.

Ignorance of the program was no excuse. I had read the Big Book, and could spout jargon at the sound of a beer can opening. I had gone to Alanon off and on for a while, and could see the value of the steps, but could not rearrange my life in relation to this other person's addiction.

The strain of using and trying to appear normal was getting to me. Finally, when I had been clean over a week on another round of self-recovery I went to my first CA meeting.

Being part of a program and, now, being of service, is very important to me. There are times when I know I could get away with using, but I don't want to deceive my fellowship by pretending. I understand that unless I use the steps and the fellowship, unless I honor my commitments, my sobriety is at risk.

There are days when I wish I had a life partner who was in recovery; but it matters to me less and less, the more I work my program. If he cannot live with me as I am becoming — involved in service, working the steps and traditions, then he will fall away from my life as my Higher Power wills it. For me to try to run my own life at this point would be to return to the unmanageable situation I was in before. Each right choice narrows the way and removes another wrong choice from my life.

Thanks for letting me share.

*Anonymous*

# PROGRAM POETRY

## *Request*

Fill us with knowledge and wisdom,  
Share past and continuing growth,  
Of the mind as well as the everyday life,  
Careful guidance is needed for both.

Teach the young by example,  
As words are easy to utter,  
Remember that soon they will follow,  
The path that's been paved by another.

Now is the time to repair,  
The ruts in the paths of our pasts.  
It's never too late to learn new ways,  
While making an impression that lasts.

So take some time to acknowledge,  
The struggling young of today,  
And find it in your heart to help and understand,  
As tomorrow might be too late.

*K.E. Elgin, IL*

## *A Poem For One of Us*

Come back, my brother,  
come back and be free.

Because you can have sunshine  
on a cloudy day.....again.

Just pray and ask God for help;  
it should be easy for you,  
because everyone knows that you  
ain't too proud to beg.

Come back, my brother,  
come back and be free.

Now it's time for you to have  
A miracle, and you can  
because God is...

Come back, my brother,  
Yeah, come back and be free.

*G.P. Chicago, IL*

## THE CONNECTION NEEDS YOU!!!

STORIES, POEMS,  
QUOTES, LETTERS,  
CARTOONS...

Send Submission (with signed release)  
to: THE CONNECTION  
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You may use initials Y\_\_\_ N\_\_\_

Legal Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

You may use my city, state Y\_\_\_ N\_\_\_

## Devil's Angel in My Life

Once again the year has past,  
This one was almost my last.  
The Devil's white angel moved into my life,  
And created heartache and personal strife.

I snorted my house and my business too;  
I lost friends and money;  
I became depressed, sad and blue.  
It took over my mind, my whole inner self;  
The real me was dying, I had to get help.

Again and again I tried to quit;  
But she always convinced me to take one more hit.  
My brain was so scrambled, I was so confused,  
And she turned that into a reason to use.

I checked into treatment to get my head together;  
Now I work step, stay clean and life is so much better.  
I was running from pain and hiding from shame;  
I thought that if I didn't use drugs I'd go insane.

The solution was simple; I just had to choose,  
To care about myself more than I did drugs and booze.  
I still want to quit, so for today I don't use,  
Because the one thing I've learned is:  
If you use, you lose!!!

J.R. Salt Lake City, Utah

## THE CONNECTION

Invites your area  
to present a  
Regional Issue

If your area has:

- 3 - 4 personal stories (pitches on paper)
- 2 - 3 poems on life in recovery
- 2 - 3 short letters on recovery
- cartoons, quotes and notes

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