

## Willingness Is the Key Concept

By Eddie F., San Diego, CA

I knew I couldn't quit. I had made a decision years ago that I would drink and drug until my dying day. Nothing had slowed me down, not even alcohol poisoning or a cocaine-induced stroke. I just could not quit boozing and smoking cocaine on my own will power.

Eventually I was on the run from dealers, creditors, police, from everything and every one, living in absolute fear.

I had tried doctors, church, a good woman, AA meetings, and moving around the country. I didn't know about CA at this time. I knew nothing would work, but I still wanted the insanity to stop. By now I was in my 30's and couldn't believe I was still alive. I had just assumed I would die long before this time. So now what?

I found CA through the hotline and went back to meetings. I couldn't stay, but I kept coming back. Nine or ten sponsors later, a couple of them had gotten loaded with me, sticking a needle in their arm or smoking crack with me at my home. Many people in CA were scared to even talk to me anymore. I would go to meetings, and all I could think about was the next hit. I just couldn't get willing enough to seek God and stay clean. As a result, I spent several more years struggling with my addiction.

I wasn't born addicted. I came from a good family and had every advantage in life as a child. But in the end, no one who had once cared for me or loved me could stand to see what I had become. At one time, I had a good job and some respect, even as a semi-functioning alcoholic/addict. Now, I couldn't hold any job for more than a matter of weeks, and for years hadn't been able to work at all. For quite some time no one could trust me, not family, friends, employers, society at large. I had been smoking cocaine on a daily basis, drinking, smoking pot, and popping pills for so long.

How had my life come to this? I had cheated death a thousand times. God must have a purpose for me. The torture would go on for one more year before I screamed, not only in desperation, but with every fiber of

my soul for God's help... Help to take the action necessary to maintain a spiritual connection and be relieved of that hideous obsession to use cocaine and drink. At that moment, a true miracle occurred. God would separate me from cocaine and ALL mind altering substances.

My story of recovery is nothing short of a miracle, which could have never occurred by unaided human will. Of course, this happens every day somewhere in the world in CA. No human power could have relieved my suffering. But God could, and did when sought. I finally sought to have a vital spiritual experience.

On April 10, 1997 God gave me the power to become willing to take all necessary action to recover from a hopeless state of mind and body. I was severely addicted to cocaine and booze, and knew that even with faith in God, it would take consistent action on my part to break this hideous cycle. I became willing to take the steps quickly. I didn't have time to wait. I was dying fast. I got into service in CA and began to carry the message of the Twelve Steps. Some old CA friends stood by me and helped. I was able to get a sponsor who had been involved in a Big Book/step study for many years to guide me through the steps. He prayed with me right away, and we did a Third Step together.

I took the steps as quickly and thoroughly as I could with my sponsor. Right after my Fifth Step I felt different, and got right on 6 and 7. During my Seventh Step, I was praying with two other members of the Fellowship. At that moment I felt I knew God as never before. I got weak in the knees and had to sit down.

I felt at that time I would never have to drink or use again. Spiritual experiences had happened at other times in my life, but I never used the window of grace to stay in action and seek to improve my connection with God. No longer do I live in fear on a daily basis. I live most of the time with a degree of peace and serenity. I have a family back in my life that loves me. I have **continued on Page: 4**

## VI

By Joe S., Pacific South Regional Trustee, Orange, CA

*On behalf of CA as a whole, our World Service Conference has the principal responsibility for the maintenance of our world services, and it traditionally has the final decision respecting large matters of general policy and finance. But the Conference also recognizes that the chief initiative and the active responsibility in most of these matters should be exercised primarily by the Trustee members of the Conference when they act among themselves as the World Service Board of Cocaine Anonymous.*

I would venture to say that most CA members are not familiar with our Twelve Concepts for World Service. Cocaine Anonymous is one of the few Twelve Step organizations which have sought (and received) permission from Alcoholics Anonymous to adapt the Twelve Concepts for their own use. The Concepts were set down by Bill Wilson, but they actually evolved over time as the AA Fellowship grew. "These Concepts therefore aim to record the 'why' of our service structure in such a fashion that the highly valuable experience of the past, and the lessons we have drawn from that experience, can never be forgotten or lost." (AA Service Manual, page three)

The Concepts, then, should provide a road map of where our Fellowship has been (building on the experience of AA), and where it is going – we hope. They also serve as a point of reference, should we stray too far from our primary purpose, thus making our journey back that much more direct. Some of the Concepts are primarily spiritual in nature, while others are more concerned with how our various service entities work in relation to one another.

In the Sixth Concept, we are reminded of the structure of our **continued on Page: 4**



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## A Note from the WSO

*"In addition to finding a spiritual way of life, recovery is about changing negative aspects of our personalities into positive ones... We had no concept of doing anything for anyone without the thought of some kind of reward. By the sheer grace of our Higher Powers, we have found several ways of unlearning such behavior in the program... We discovered that the best way to serve God was to serve our fellow humans, and we found humility in the process. Our self-centered behavior was gradually replaced with the "attitude of service." From the CA pamphlet "Being of Service".*

I wanted to start off this Note with something that communicated a little of what I, and others who also serve on the WSO Board of Directors, have received as the result of our commitments to service on behalf of Cocaine Anonymous. For some, a chapter of their service life is coming to a close. I (the current Chairman of the Board), the World Service Office Trustee and Pacific South Regional Trustee, will all rotate out at the end of the Conference later this month. Collectively we have served over 15 years on the World Service Office Board of Directors. I know that this effort has changed all of us and, I believe, for the better. Service is not always delightful; we all have to work a strong program to be able to deal with the ups and downs, but it is ever so spiritually rewarding (even when we don't think so). The Fellowship of Cocaine Anonymous will survive if each of us remembers that "personal recovery depends on CA unity" (*Tradition One*). It was CA that saved my life because there were people willing to take time from their busy schedules to setup a meeting that I could attend. So I will continue to be of service at some level. I owe CA that much at least.

Speaking of the Conference, it will be held at a hotel near both the airport and the World Service Office for 5 days over the Labor Day weekend. During that time Delegates, Trustees and WSO Board members will gather to discuss the business of CA as a whole. Reports from all aspects of World Services will be presented. If you are in the area be sure to stop by. All members of the Fellowship are invited to participate on the Committee work and attend the floor sessions.

We have recently sent out the new Internet Guidelines as well as a Web start-up kit to all areas currently linked on our website, [www.ca.org](http://www.ca.org). If your area is planning to setup a Web site that you want linked on the World Service website you must get a copy of the Guidelines. The office staff will be advising the Board of sites that do not comply. We will have no choice but to unlink the offending page if corrective action is not taken. This process is only beginning, so if you come across a page that you believe is non-compliant please let us know.

Lastly, I am proud to announce that our Fellowship has just enjoyed its most successful World Service Convention ever. Congratulations Phoenix and the CAWS 2000 Committee for a job very well done! Hope to see everyone in the Big Apple next year. It looks like it will be a spectacular event and already has generated a great deal of enthusiasm and reservations.

*In love and service, Scott S. for the World Service Office Board and staff*

### Attention: CA Hotline Chairs

If your hotline number covers other area codes, please let the World Service Office know. The other area codes will be added to your hotline number for referencing purposes in the 800 # computer. Please phone (310) 559-5833, Fax (310) 559-2554 or e-mail [cawso@ca.org](mailto:cawso@ca.org).

The NewsGram is always looking for submissions! If you have ideas, cartoons, poems, stories or any other recovery or service related material that you would like considered for publication in future issues of the NewsGram, please forward with written permission and your original work to: NewsGram Editor, c/o CAWSO, Inc., 3740 Overland Avenue - Suite C, Los Angeles, CA 90034. Remember, we receive a lot of contributions, so your submission may not be selected, or at least not right away. You may see it in an upcoming issue!

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# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## **2001: A Grace Odyssey**

August 15th, 2000 submission deadline  
5- Color Design/Theme w/CA logo needed for  
Celebrate Around The World  
208/734-5807 or wildrosewolf@yahoo.com

## **August 24th-26th, 2000**

CA L.A. Convention 2000  
Journey Into Recovery  
Riviera Resort & Racquet Club  
Palm Springs, California  
562/799-9344 or ca4la.org

## **September 7th-10th, 2000**

Big Sur-enity  
Ventana Campground  
Big Sur, California  
800/357-1488

## **September 28th-October 1st, 2000**

Utah Rockies XI  
Grand Summit Resort  
Park City, UT  
801/581-0248

## **October 21st, 2000**

3rd Annual Women's Luncheon  
Greater St. Louis District  
212 N. Kings Highway  
St. Louis, MO  
877/587-2427

## **October 27th-29th, 2000**

12th Midwest Regional Convention  
Magical Recovery Tour  
Hyatt Regency Woodfield  
Schaumburg, IL  
847/299-7666 or 847/298-4144

## **October 27th-29th, 2000**

Washington State Convention  
Great Events Will Come To Pass  
Enzian Inn  
590 Highway 2  
Leavenworth, WA  
425/258-4175 or 800/723-1923

## **October 27th-29th, 2000**

CA of NV 1st Annual Convention  
Rocketed into the 4th Dimension  
Riviera Hotel & Casino  
2901 Las Vegas Blvd. South  
Las Vegas, NV  
702/734-5110

## **May 24th-28th, 2001**

World Service Convention  
2001: A Grace Odyssey  
New York Hilton  
1335 Avenue of the Americas  
New York, NY  
718/539-8462 or 212/228-8782

## **November 3rd-5th, 2001**

2001 Midwest Regional Convention  
Radisson Hotel Airport  
St. Louis, MO  
314/865-1798 or 816/931-2077

## **CANADA:**

## **September 8th-10th, 2000**

15th Bilingual Quebec Area Convention  
The Wings of Freedom  
Hotel Wyndham Montreal  
Montreal, Quebec  
514/937-7284

## **November 3rd-5th, 2000**

TORCA IV  
A New Beginning  
Southern Ontario Convention  
416/467-0511 or myrecovery@home.com

## **March 30th-April 1st 2001**

Pacific North Regional Convention  
Super Natural Serenity  
Lonsdale Quay Hotel  
123 Carrie Cates Court  
North Vancouver BC  
604/986-6111 or flowerz@axionet.com

*If you are having a Regional, Area or District Cocaine Anonymous Event, please let us know. We can list your event in the NewsGram. Submission deadline is 30 days prior to the publication of each NewsGram. Publication dates are: February 1st, May 1st, August 1st, and November 1st. We will publish up to a year in advance, and continue the listing until the event. Submissions will be published at the discretion of the editor and/or the World Service Office Board of Directors.*

## **Submissions should be made to:**

ATTN: The NewsGram  
c/o CAWSO, Inc.  
3740 Overland Avenue – Suite C  
Los Angeles, CA 90034-6337  
(310) 559-2554 FAX



# Goodbye Cocaine

By Nicole C., Chicago, IL

Goodbye Cocaine, you were my best friend and my lover. My fascination with you made me feel wonderful at first, but then you turned on me and made me need nothing but you. Your grip was very tight, and I held on for my life. You were the source of all my despair, my pain, my grief, my agony, my resentment and my horror. You made me do terrible things to people: lying, cheating and manipulating. You picked my friends for me, ordered me around, dictated to me the things that I needed and wanted. You told me that the things I was doing were okay, that I was 'normal' and that everyone else had problems. You are a cunning bastard and I won't let you ruin my life or those around me any longer.

I know you will talk to me now and again and, God willing, I will never make another deal with you. You truly are evil and you dis-

gust me. I shudder to think about all of the lives that you ruin and have ruined, all of the families and relationships and friendships that you destroy with one heaping breath of your wretched despair.

God will protect me, and that is something you will never be able to do for me. God has been with me from the start. I wandered away from God, off into your disgraceful world, but now I am back. I have been welcomed with open arms. I have a life with true and genuine people today that God has chosen for me. I have the strength to make it through today dealing with my emotions and feelings by speaking and praying about them, not pushing them down like you used to help me do. I am growing spiritually and I no longer need you to help me deal with my life. Nothing is so bad that I need to use again. I now have a choice, and I have hope. So I say farewell to you Cocaine, you have worn out your welcome in my life.

## Willingness Has Its Rewards

Today I like myself, deeply, from the inside out. My fear of people has been greatly reduced, and continues to shrink. The areas of personal relations, daily life, and work are calm and pleasant; no longer chaotic. I enjoy the friendship of my now adult daughter and my parents.

It has taken several years of work, patience, hope, love, inventories, tears, and honest sharing of feelings to get to this point. It would never have happened without the courage and faith I learned in the program of Cocaine Anonymous, and the Steps to guide me in cleaning up the wreckage of my past and re-establishing relations.

Today, in my life, there is a feeling of peace and security such as I have never known. Life seems good to me today. I haven't felt the self-loathing or the screaming, ragged pain in my guts at all for a couple of years now, thanks to the Steps and the

healing brought about by working them.

I know that I am a different, much better person now than I ever was, even before I used. All of the Promises have come true in my life. Each day sober is better than the one before, in a lot of ways.

Today I know that I am powerless over the outcome of everything and that my life is still unmanageable by me. Today I believe that a Power greater than myself can, and is, restoring me to sanity in every area of my life. I have faith that this miracle will continue, as long as I keep doing the footwork.

I wish that everyone could find what has been given to me. But I know that only a few will be willing enough to take this path. I hope and pray that you, my reader, will be one of those. I lost nothing but my misery.

— *Excerpted from the book "Hope, Faith & Courage – Stories from the Fellowship of Cocaine Anonymous," pages 37 and 38.*

## Concept VI...

continued from Pg. 1

sion making process. Many of you may be aware of the "inverted pyramid" of our service structure, as outlined in the Cocaine Anonymous World Service Manual. This means that the group conscience of each CA group should be expressed to its District, Districts through Areas, which in turn elect Delegates to the World Service Conference. The World Service Conference, then, is the ultimate voice of the group conscience of our entire Fellowship. But for obvious reasons, the World Service Conference can only meet for a few days once a year – someone must make decisions on behalf of CA during the remainder of the year when the group conscience of the Conference is unavailable. Thus, as this Concept makes clear, the Conference is better left to larger matters of policy. On an ongoing basis, however, the Conference must delegate to trusted servants (in this case appropriately called "Trustees") the broad authority necessary to carry out these policies.

Many of the operations of our World Services, though spiritual in their ultimate intent, are essentially business matters. Cocaine Anonymous World Services, Inc. is a corporation that publishes literature, ships materials, manages finances, etc. As a practical matter, the Conference must delegate to the Trustees liberal authority to oversee the finances and public information activities, to oversee the operations of our World Service Office, and to guide the Fellowship as the active guardians of our Twelve Traditions.

## Willingness...

continued from Pg. 1

friends who really care, and I care too. What has happened in my life is truly an absolute miracle!

The more I continue to be of service to CA and carry the message, the fuller and more enriched my life becomes. No matter how much I give of myself to this Fellowship, it could never equal what I've been given. What a freedom! Frequently tears of joy flow down my face when I think of the life I've been given, and I see other folks who recover from this fatal disease. Thank you, CA for being there for me and countless others in those darkest moments.

**Visit us in CyberSpace**

The Cocaine Anonymous World Service Home Page is available at:

**<http://www.ca.org>**

You can e-mail us at: **[cawso@ca.org](mailto:cawso@ca.org)**



# 2001: A GRACE ODYSSEY

2001 WORLD SERVICE CONVENTION

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May 24-28, 2001

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## Faith in a Higher Power

Cocaine Anonymous introduced us to a Power greater than ourselves that could manage our problem. That doesn't necessarily mean we have to turn our will and our lives over to the care of the God that we heard of in the past. It can mean trusting a Power of our own understanding. This is the beginning of our Higher Power, God as we understand Him.

Some of us adopt, or come back to, a traditional God. Others see our Higher Power as some kind of force. Some define it as the force of the group, while others don't define it at all.

At first, it is sufficient for God, as you understand Him, to be the power that the group obviously has to help to get rid of the obsession to use.

No one comes into Cocaine Anonymous to find God. We come to these rooms to get rid of a terrifying drug habit. Look around in a meeting. You are surrounded by people who came as a last resort. We came into these rooms emotionally, financially and spiritually bankrupt. We have experienced all sorts of tragedies as a result of cocaine, drugs and/or alcohol. We have lived many of the same horrors you have, yet today we are happy. We are free from the misery, terror, and pain of drug addiction.

As long as you are willing, your belief will grow. You will learn through your own experience and the experiences of others how a Higher Power can help you with your cocaine problem... If you are having trouble with the talk about God, remember:

- Be open-minded
- CA is a spiritual program, not a religious one
- All you have to do is to be willing to believe
- Your Higher Power can be the group as a whole
- You start with belief, your experience will come.

Don't leave before the miracle happens!  
(Excerpted from the CA Pamphlet "A Higher Power")

The NewsGram presents experiences and opinions of Cocaine Anonymous members. The opinions expressed herein are those of the individual contributors and are not to be attributed to nor taken as an endorsement by either Cocaine Anonymous or the NewsGram.



# From the Archives CA and the AA Big Book

By Craig H., Chicago, IL

*From time to time the NewsGram will be reprinting articles from past issues. One of our members has requested that we reprint this article, which we believe will be of interest to the fellowship as a whole. When this article was originally printed in 1994, the author was Midwest Regional Trustee.*

Cocaine Anonymous has had a close and yet very confusing relationship since its beginnings with the book affectionately referred to as the "Big Book," more properly known as *Alcoholics Anonymous*. Early on we sought and received permission from AA to adapt the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions to our own recovery program, giving proper credit – of course – to the original source. (We were also one of the few "12-Step" programs to request permission to adapt the Twelve Concepts for World Service, but that's another story!)

We also asked AA's permission to use the Big Book, as well as the *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* ("12 & 12") in our meetings as a guide to the recovery program. This permission, not to rewrite or adopt as "official" CA literature, but to read and study the original source materials on the 12-step recovery program, was also granted. We also asked Narcotics Anonymous, which was attended by many of our members, for similar permission to use their book, and that permission was not given.

There was much debate in the early years about what we ought to say about our relationship to the "Big Book" and "12 & 12." Opinions ranged from those who wanted to endorse, approve, adopt, or even grant "Conference Approved" status to these books to those who insisted we say nothing at all about them to avoid any hint of affiliation with any other enterprise. Obviously this was a very delicate issue – how could we acknowledge the spiritual roots of our program of recovery and source of much of its practical direction, and make it clear to CA members that it was "ok" to read and study these books without compromising our integrity as a Fellowship?

Finally, in an effort to clarify our relationship with these two books, making clear the complete lack of affiliation with any outside entity in keeping with the Sixth Tradition, the World Service Conference – the voice of the group conscience of the whole Fellowship – passed the



following advisory opinion on August 20th, 1989: "THE BOOKS ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS AND TWELVE STEPS AND TWELVE TRADITIONS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS ARE TWO OF OUR MOST VALUABLE TOOLS OF RECOVERY AND AS SUCH, IT IS THE OPINION OF COCAINE ANONYMOUS THAT MEETINGS SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO HAVE THESE BOOKS AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT MEMBERS IN THEIR RECOVERY."

What this quite clearly means is that we do not own these books, they are not ours to change or even say that they are "ours" in any sense of the word. These books are generously loaned to us, for our use, by AA, and for that we are truly grateful.

About this same time, while many of us acknowledged that the heart of the recovery program was described in the first 164 pages of the "Big Book," many of the personal stories were hard to identify with, particularly for newcomers. We needed a book to call our own, and felt strongly that we couldn't improve on the set of directions in that first 164 pages, but we could certainly tell our own stories! As a result, we are able to hold in our hands Hope, Faith and Courage – our own book of stories – through the efforts of many trusted servants. But we also have the "Big Book" and "12 & 12" to refer to for guidance in reading the roadmap of recovery.

*If you have a favorite article from a past NewsGram that you think should be reprinted, please forward a copy of it to the editor at the address on the inside front cover.*

# Spiritual Awakening

By Rudy R., Colton, CA

When I got sick and tired of being sick and tired, when I knew drugs had beaten me, when I knew that drugs had control of my life, when I finally admitted that drugs were my master, I had this empty feeling in the pit of my inner self. My self-will could not control drugs or my life anymore. I was lonely, for I had built up walls around me. I had burnt every bridge behind me.

I had low self-esteem. I could not look people in the eyes, for I was fearful of people looking inside of me. I did not love myself. I did not feel comfortable under my skin. I was like a tornado destroying everything around me, even myself. I did not know how to live, or how to die.

I did not believe in God, nor did I think that God believed in me anymore. I never knew at the time that He had been watching over me all along. But in the end I somehow managed to summon the smallest amount of hope that He "could and would if He were sought." I got on my knees and cried out from within my heart, "God, please help me!" I reached out my arms to Him and it wasn't like he opened the doors of Heaven and let me in, but rather that he opened the doors of Hell and pulled me out. I felt an inner peace like I had never felt before. I felt God watching over me that night, and I slept like a child.

When I awoke the next morning it felt just like after a storm at sea, and the sea was now unbelievably calm. I knew that I had just had a spiritual awakening. The next day I attended my first meeting of Cocaine Anonymous. Today I am a grateful recovering addict.

## Get Published!

The Literature Chips and Format Committee is now accepting stories for the Second Edition of **Hope, Faith and Courage**. Publication is tentatively scheduled for 2003. Please limit your submission to five typewritten pages and include your name, address and phone number. Note: all identifying references will be deleted before being forwarded to the committee, who must review these stories as *anonymous* submissions. Any contact with committee members that identifies the author of a story will seriously reduce that story's chance of being published.

Send your story to:

**CAWSO**

Attn: Storybook Committee

3740 Overland Ave. #C

Los Angeles, CA 90034-6337

# Trustee Corner

Welcome to the Trustee Corner, a new feature of the NewsGram in which we, your World Service Board of Trustees (WSBT), will be trying to keep the Fellowship of CA better informed about our activities. As many of you know, the Trustees hold quarterly meetings. We attend three meetings in Los Angeles (one immediately preceding the Conference) and one preceding the World Service Convention, in whichever city it is held. These meetings are held over an evening session (7 p.m. – 11 p.m.), a full day (9 a.m. – 11 p.m.) and a morning (8 a.m. – 1 p.m.). Although the minutes of these meetings are distributed, we are still often asked, “what is it that you do at those meetings?”

Here is the beginning of an answer. We start on the first evening with personal sharing which lasts for about 2 to 3 hours. We have found that the personal sharing is critical to our knowing each other in a way that we can act together as the WSBT to make decisions on large matters of general

policy and finance. After reviewing the previous meeting’s minutes, we distribute our Trustee reports so that we can review them on our own prior to meeting the next morning. We do this rather than to take up a lot of time during our meeting. And yes, we often do review those at 11 p.m. after our meeting adjourns.

The following morning we discuss two of the Traditions and two of the Concepts of Service. These discussions last from one to two hours and are often quite productive; they are an opportunity for us to review these principles and see how they apply to our Fellowship in both a general and specific way. Of approximately twenty hours spent in meetings, these preliminary items comprise around four to five hours. We feel that this is time very well spent. In future articles we will discuss other parts of the Trustee meetings as well as other commitments and duties.

At our most recent meeting (May 2000, in Phoenix) there were a few items which took up a significant amount of time in our discussions. Of course the upcoming Convention was discussed, and childcare was a

hot topic. Fundraising was also discussed at length. Canadian issues of representation, royalties and cost of supplies have been reviewed throughout the last year. These issues will also be addressed at the 2000 World Service Conference, and your elected World Service Delegates will bring this information back to your Areas.

Please note that the World Service Office does send WSBT meeting minutes out with the Delegate mailings, four times a year. The Trustees also have a PO box, which is listed in every NewsGram. If you are not getting the information about World Services that you feel you need, talk to your Delegates and Trustees. We are all here to serve you. We hope to see or talk to you all soon. Thanks for letting us be of service.

## H&I CORNER

# Rediscovering through H&I

By James S., Raleigh, NC

When somebody first told me that volunteering to carry the message into Hospitals and Institutions would help my recovery, it didn’t make sense to me. I had always found that the farther I stayed away from people who were actively struggling with their addictions, the better. But I have learned in this program to take direction, so I was willing to try.

The first time I spoke on an H&I panel I was unsure of what to say. Again, I was able to follow direction when it was suggested that I just needed “to be honest, and it will be okay”. I realized that this was not going to be easy, for to be honest with these people meant that they would surely see all of my faults. But a strange thing happened as I talked about what it was like when I was using, what happened, and what it’s like now. I connected with all those newly recovering addicts that, a few months earlier, I thought I had nothing in common with. They responded to my honesty by being honest in return. It was really amazing.

Today I do H&I service work as often as I can, because when I do, I am always reminded that *to carry the message is to also be carried by the message.*



## UNITY CORNER

# I Sometimes Forget

By Ray R., New York, NY

I sometimes forget that I am not as unique as I once thought. Learning to adapt to any and all situations was the norm when I was actively using. To become one with my inner being in sobriety was a completely different task. While living under the influence of cocaine and other mind- and mood-altering substances, my best reasoning led me to a life of hopeless and unfulfilled desires. My purpose and aim in life was set on destruction of self (and whomever else I could drag along with me).

Life had no meaning before I began to realize that we all have a place in the society we share with all God’s creatures. Coming into Cocaine Anonymous I found the relief that my mind, body and soul had been seeking throughout my existence. This Fellowship has taught me how to first like myself in hopes that someday I will learn to love and forgive myself. I am constantly reminded that my tolerance of others begins with my tolerance of self.

To be at peace brings the freedom of not having to decide where I belong. Just knowing that I belong is sufficient today for me and for my Higher Power. For it is by God’s grace and mercy that I was saved from death, institutions and prison. Because I have been saved from these fates, I have no right to allow any type of prejudice, envy or insecurity to prohibit me from carrying the message to those who still suffer. It’s more important to help save someone’s life than to allow my own perceptions to destroy both our lives.

If the forefathers of our Fellowship did not seek the counsel of a Higher Power to inspire the Steps and Traditions, where would this Fellowship be? With peace comes spirituality. It is the spirituality of the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions that govern my life today. We are all bonded by our common problem and our common solution.

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