

Welcome to this second edition brought to you by your district service committee!

We decided to focus on 'hope' for this one with a fair few testimonies showing how it manifests across our fellowship. As always, massive thanks to every member of our fellowship for all your help in ensuring the new man / woman who doesn't believe recovery is possible hears a message with depth, weight and hope.

Couple of service related points;

As many of you may already be aware we are holding a 'district GSR assembly' on the **25/04/20 between 09:00 - 12 noon.**

This will be using the Zoom platform, link to be sent out separately.

Trad 7 - we have a couple of options for donating to our district bank account to discuss on the 25th. In the meantime please don't stop donating to World!

When things return to some kind of normal please don't forget to start reaching out to your physical meeting venues.

This lockdown will end (one day) and we all need to be mindful of continuing our good relations with providers and getting an idea of whether they will be happy for our meetings to return.

Hope you enjoy this edition

LIF

Matt S

How I try to stay well in isolation.

I try to stay connected to God, my family, friends, sponsor, sponsees and fellows with prayer, meditation, Inventory and picking up the phone. When I contact someone in recovery by video call, phone call or text and they don't answer, I tell myself to remember that addicts and alcoholics are very sick people! If they aren't picking up the phone, maybe it's because they're in a dark place! I say the prayer "God this is a sick person, how can I help them, God save me from being angry, Thy will, not mine be done, Amen." I have to dive into working with others, I've got two sponsees that I'm taking through the steps over video call. I keep myself busy with things I enjoy watching movies, watching Netflix & playing computer games. I listen to friends play live music online. I watch the news to keep up-to-date with what's going on but I don't overdo it. I only watch it once a day at 10 pm, I find if I watch it too much I get overwhelmed and anxious. I take walks for exercise along nature trails, this is good for my mental health. Also I am blessed with having a garden. I do meditation & online meetings everyday. My day is always full with these activities. This stops me going into self pity.

I'm an addict and like you I'm on lockdown.

As a husband, father and employee the only way I've found to cope is balance, keep it simple and first things first and 3 weeks in I am managing to keep sane most days. First things first, my addiction is with me the moment I wake up so the first thing I have to do is pray and meditate, then I start my working day, I'm blessed at not needing much sleep so my working day usually starts early. I try to get an early meeting in around work which has helped immensely. In the outside

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world this isn't possible but I've embraced the online meetings I'm used to them now and my scepticism has left me, then usually by lunchtime it is family time I have 5 children so this is where the balance comes in even if we may not leave the house together at this time I make sure after lunchtime I'm present for my family. I go out with the kids or sometimes on my own and sit and reflect or meditate if I need it. I know the guidelines are to go out for exercise but if you are anything like me exercising my mind is as important as a run or a walk. Once family time and dinner is done I can sometimes log back into work or grab a meeting depending on how I feel or my commitments. In the 3 weeks I've kept up service where possible or being a regular attendee at those meetings I have service in, even if it's not possible to actually do the service itself. I also kept my commitment to doing a chair when asked. This is a rose tinted look at my days but generally this is how they have been because of a regimented regime. On the days this may not have been the case I have tried to remember to keep it simple, if work hasn't gone how I think it is supposed to, I haven't tried to work into the early hours or do extra the next day as sometimes it is what it is. If the kids have been particularly testing the same applies. I finish my day with a gratitude list as it helps me see the good things I have in my life rather than my go to which is the negative. I was told a grateful addict need never use again so gratitude for me is just as important as my morning routine.

Crazy time we find ourselves in.

I must admit I'm super grateful to be in recovery right now as I remember how painful it was before I found it, could you imagine that pain! With the pain of a global pandemic and not being aloud to get your fix!!!

I am actually coping quite well with this finding new ways to be helpful to people online

through the meetings and my service turns out the book was right when it said the only difference is the format hey. I have taken some time to work on my list of dreams by working on my project of my camper van that I just could not find the time to do in normal everyday living. I have bought that mountain bike I had been threatening to get my self for about a year so (I put a request out on face book and it did not cost much at all) as you can see there are some positive things to be had here extra work on meditation and that extra bit of time in the morning with the old HP, now we have another 3 weeks I shall try to read some books I have been meaning to pick up for months, I could not be more grateful for the 12 steps for giving me some peace in my life and now having some time to sit with my self is sometimes quite a nice experience.

I promise you...

In my experience, it is possible to stay drink and drunk free, one day at a time, even in the face the most difficult of situations. You are not alone in this; there is a whole fellowship waiting to hold hope for you until you're able to find hope for yourself again. The opposite of addiction is spiritual connection with another addict and connection with a higher power of your own understanding. It is possible, with CA, to - one day at a time - live a life full of hope, faith and courage.

In the past, I would have used on this crisis and my fear around it. I would have seen my isolation as a prime opportunity to use on my own. Today, I am nearly nine months clean and sober, and I am able to devote my isolation, and the hours I am at home, to doing as much recovery as I possibly can, to connecting with meetings online and to speaking to fellows over the phone. I am blessed to have the life I have today. That's what's on offer in CA, even in these difficult times: a life beyond your wildest dreams.

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In July 2018 I called the CA helpline...

I spoke to two fellows who listened to me and said there is a way out. (One of these guys became my first sponsor). They directed me to my first CA meeting on Monday night Worthing Big Book Study and I have not stopped attending meetings since that day. I have now completed the steps, found God, sponsor other men, attend regular meetings and do service at group and district level and want to help people whenever I can. I have found a new way of living and my obsession for drink and drugs has been removed. I owe my life to this fellowship and there is a way out if you are willing to put in a little work in and surrender.

I sit here in the most surreal situation.

I find myself sat in my first floor flat for over 4 weeks now without being able to cross the front door. I'm in the shielded extremely clinically vulnerable group and due to covid 19 i am safer here. I relapsed just under 5 months ago. And at that time I wasn't alone in the physical sense. Perhaps people might think this makes me vulnerable. Not so. I do what I need to every day. But what about the fact I have no physical meetings? I am Perhaps lucky that I found my recovery by finding a cocaine anonymous meeting online I found this meeting after I reached out to someone who I knew had already had an issue with mind Altering substances and she led me to a virtual meeting where the women vibrated love care and kindness. The power immediately of one addict helping another. This brings me to now. Online connection for our fellowship is all we have right now. I'm not alone, my spiritual journey continues and I know God is with me even when I'm not talking to him as much as I should. The fact that cocaine anonymous finds a way is only down to the fact seeds get sown everyday and they do grow and flourish. Even if they are virtual ones.

During this uncertain time of isolation.

I'm almost amazed to find that my program of recovery and more importantly the God of my understanding, has filled me with a sense of purpose and direction, continues to make me feel useful, and above all fills me with peace so great that its hard to describe. The online meetings, whether they are on Skype or Zoom or any other platform have been a great comfort to me also, it's truly amazing at a time when we are all separated to be able join in on a video call and feel so connected to my fellows and still hear the solution that is found in this program.

I've had to adapt and make changes to make sure I stay well In lockdown.

I ring and message more people more often. I engage in online recovery on social media and try and always answer my phone to another addict. The days are longer and lonelier so I need to do a bit more recovery action. Nightly inventory has become especially important to me as staying in can trick me into thinking I have done nothing worthwhile all day. Writing out what I have done, even if it seems small the phone calls to other addicts, the messages I've sent, newcomers I've reached out to in meetings or on social media.

All of this helps show me that I can still be productive at home, that I can still be of service to my fellows during social distancing. It helps me keep on top of fear and check that my thinking is staying healthy. Today I am happy and content, today I have faith in a programme that gives me peace of mind and comfort no matter what may come.

I feel very blessed and grateful to be an addict, and very lucky to be a part of such a big recovery community; it means I am never alone.

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lockdown has bought some real challenges,

Finding ways of slowing myself down has been a mission. The first few days of constant screen time sent me a bit mad. Looking at news feeds all day was taking away my peace of mind. I decided to put my phone away for a few hours at a time. With that distraction out of the way, I decided to start reading again. I picked a few books off the shelf that I have never read. Not recovery books or biographies, but novels. To begin with I found it difficult to stay focused as my mind is used to working so much quicker and looking for distraction, but reading has helped my mind switch off and slow down. I am truly in the moment, living the story. I am away from the stresses of daily life. It's become a daily practice and I'm finding it a great way to switch off.

The Breakfast Club

Like most fellows, I had a real sense of loss when we had to close our meeting venues. Never did I think I'd miss those cold church rooms, but I did. And I miss my home group, the lovely Sunshine Cafe in Hove.

I got clean in the 7:30am Wednesday meeting when we had 5 people sitting round a coffee table. It has grown into a big meeting in a few short years, and it attracts newly clean insomniacs, those needing 2 meetings a day, and those with a few years of clean time.

When the virus meant we had to shut the meeting, we knew we had to act quickly so the newcomer could still find us.

We were up and running on Zoom within days and our first meeting had 30 fellows show up. Some in their pyjamas and dressing gowns, some just back from their dawn run, but all needing to feel the connection and support that the fellowship provides. Right away, we saw that our two morning meetings per week

weren't enough. Despite our worries, newcomers were actually finding us and spreading the word. Some fresh out of treatment, finding themselves isolated at home and not sleeping, some who had been around a while but struggling to deal with the uncertainty and change that the virus brought. The second week we had 35 fellows.

We started to hold informal check-ins daily for whoever wanted the company, and within a week we had a regular crew of 15. One from Newcastle, one from Kent, a cycling Glaswegian, and a good percentage with less than 90 days clean.

Recovery is all about action, so we held a group conscience after a week. We knew that our primary purpose - to help the still suffering addict - meant we had to open these informal check-ins to all. Could we support early meetings 7 days per week? Would we need a full committee for each meeting? Would we migrate the meetings to face-to-face meetings after the lockdown is over? We asked for help from our District Chair, and from the Online Service Area to check our motives and aims were in line with the 12 Traditions.

We formed a multi group meeting committee, elected 5 different secretaries, 5 greeters to open the Zoom link and welcomed fellows from 7 am. We decided we would keep the meetings online permanently, as we were attracting people that wouldn't be able to get to Brighton early mornings anyway. Zoom and Pay-pal accounts were opened, readings were chosen, names were voted on, and The Breakfast Club was born. Thus we grow.

Out of adversity comes innovation, and we are proud to be a part of how the fellowship is adapting to the "new normal". All done by a group of addicts with a desire to carry a message and provide the newcomer with a place to come upon awakening

Sussex



District

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When the Prime minister addressed the nation,

Resembling some sort of zombie apocalypse movie, I was immediately hit with a bang of fear. I relied so heavily on service & unity, how could I stay sober without these fundamental aspects of my recovery? I thought about the fact that I live alone. Would I feel the same loneliness and be riddled with the racing mind I had pre recovery? The answer is no. After the initial pang of fear I considered what I can do to stay sober and free during all of this uncertainty. I handed the fear over to God and almost immediately I could see things in a different light. The Pandemic has blessed me with the gift of time. More time for prayer & meditation, long video calls with my sponsor, walks in the great outdoors,

brushing up on my programme through an online 12-Step workshop & reaching out more than ever. The unity I have seen within the fellowship during this time has been nothing short of incredible. I was able to travel to the USA for a lunchtime meeting and be back at home for tea, connecting with people all over the world who think like me.

The time alone has also shone a light on some not-so-spiritual behaviours I have that I can now address. I know we are not out of the woods yet and it has been scary & even awkward adjusting to the zooms but I have never been so grateful for my higher power, my sponsor, my family, CA, our front-line staff & the things that make up a simple, sober life.

TRADITION 6
In the spirit of Tradition 6,
C.A. is not allied with any sect, denomination or institution
