

## THE NET-WORK

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FEB-MAR/2011

## WHO ARE YOU???

BY- TOM Q.



As time passes around my recovery, one common phrase circulates through the rooms of NA/AA and even in our own IOP/OP groups. The phrase is “We are all different, no one recovers the same way”. To me this fragmented sentence is telling us that we are all individuals. If that is true then why are we all treated the same no matter where we go? When the people we are dealing with find out about our history of addiction they tend to label us. Why? When I first decided on my own to seek out treatment, I had no problem with the label of “junkie”. I didn’t fool myself, I knew what I was and was comfortable with that label. To me the word “junkie” placed me into a group of people who were suffering just as I was. As I got further into my recovery I realized that was not the truth at all, but the truth was that each and every one of us has our own story. No two people suffer in the same way and we all have a unique story to tell. The problem with this is trying to get someone to listen to our story. Too often we find people quick to judge when we begin to tell of our journey through addiction. We hear the words, “I know” or “I understand”; when the truth is that they may not. I find it hard enough trying to help people who have never dealt with addiction understand what I have been through and what challenges I still face daily, and some of those people are the professionals I look too for support. All of us as a group have experienced our share of discrimination on an epic level. The people we have trusted and loved our entire lives at

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## WHO ARE YOU??? (CONT.)



times discriminate against us. They seem to adopt the popular opinions like “they chose to become addicted” or “its not a disease, they just don’t want to stop”. It hurts when the people you have known your whole life no longer trust you or feel uncomfortable leaving their valuables unattended in a room with you. I think we have all faced situations like that.

The problem is that in most cases they have a right to distrust us. We have done things to them that we are not proud of. It is our job to regain or rebuild that trust. What has hit me most recently is the discrimination we face from the people who are supposed to assist us with our recovery. I have listened to a large number of my peers complain about the same thing. They find the “US” and “THEM” mindset alive and well in our treatment facilities. The problem is at times we are just as much to blame as anyone else. We look and act like there is an “us” and “them” battle-taking place between the counselors and the clients at our programs. The fact is that no matter how much we rant and rave like lunatics about how we are treated, those behaviors will not change how we are seen. We need to educate ourselves and try to help other people see us for the individuals that we are. There is no greater teaching tool then leading by example. When we act “crazy” we are treated like we are “crazy”. I’m not saying that some of us don’t have legitimate complaints or concerns, that’s not the case. I think we have all dealt with people who refuse to see us as human beings, or people who decline our request to speak with them because we had a STOP placed on us on the weekend. We all get upset when we hear, “Tell your counselor on Monday, I can’t do anything about it”. What is important is how we react when we are face-to-face with these hurdles. Our gut reaction is to get upset, yell, and curse the person as we storm off. It is all too easy to join the crowd and complain or talk about that person in the waiting room. In hindsight the only person who gets hurt is you. It is time to abandon the whole “us and them” mentality. We may be individuals but we need to realize that we are all in this together. The act of a solitary person can change the way we are all seen. The only way to be treated as an individual is to act as an individual. Realize that its OK to stand alone, you are your own person with an amazing story to tell. So, stand up and tell it. Refuse to be seen as one of “THEM”. Your future is unwritten, pick up the pen and start writing...





By: Jose DeLeon

I would like for everything to be error free each time that I check-in at the program that I attend. I realize that every counselor doesn't fit the "therapists mold of perfection" just as I some-

how realized that every client doesn't fit the mold of a "perfect recovering person", if a mold ever did exist. People want to avoid all non-sense and pettiness as much as possible



which is perfectly understandable, but truthfully where does a person find the perfect counselor, peers, and/or program when involving this type of treatment? Good news seekers! According to the members of the "gossip posse" such a place has been found, oh boy-oh boy, A couple of groups for the first month, you know, just so that they can get to know you and stuff, oh boy-oh boy! No hassle from the counselors, security guards, or the director, no hassle especially from the director this place must be great. Did I mention that this place has the best policy ever when it comes to Take-Homes? I heard someone else say something about getting a take home bottle with the "red methadone" when you sign the contract, almost like a signing bonus. Most of this information came straight out of the mouths of their "long time friends" that "work there" so you know that they know what they are talking about, right? With this gossip, oh I mean, "factual information" flowing around people began to summit transfer papers wanting to get to this great sounding program A.S.A.P. A good number of people wanted to go to this program until the latest round of gossip, or factual information, began to fly around which mentions something like five 1 1/2 hours of group a week for 24 months before a person can get any

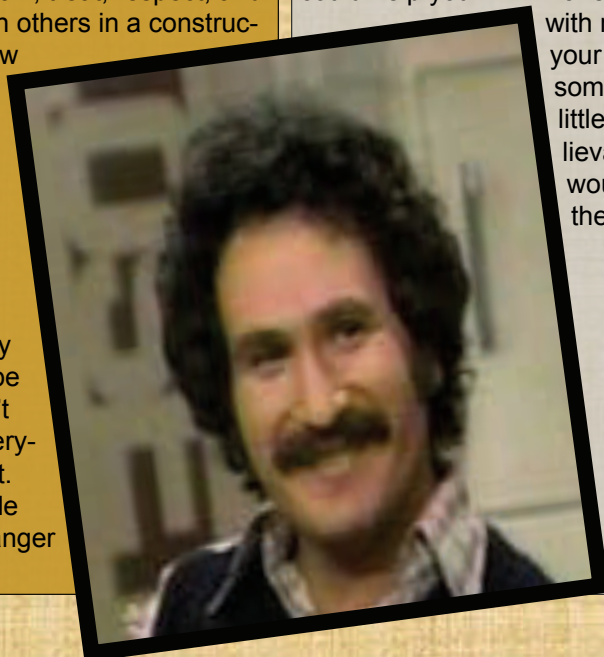
sort of Take-Homes. Whether it's true or not it really doesn't effect me at all. I believe any mature adult motivated by positive well thought-out progressive plans should be able to transfer and attend any treatment center that will accept them. Prior to coming to this program I knew that I had the choice of going to any of the approximately 9 - 15 facilities throughout this city.

Knowing that I needed positive structure and to be out of my comfort zone I decided to travel for one hour by bus/train just to get here and another hour in order to get home everyday. I needed to better my life by any means necessary regardless of anyone else's opinion or gossip about this program. My group sessions aren't perfect, but I make sure that I learn something from each session and if I don't it's no one's fault but my own. My 1 on 1 sessions are only what I make them to be and I make sure each session is beneficial to me. I make sure that I benefit from the program I attend each and everyday. Knowing how to talk, treat, respect, and communicate with others in a constructive manner is how things has always progressed in the lives of those who know, accept, and act on this truth. If knowing how to communicate effectively was easy everyone would be doing it, but it isn't and therefore everybody doesn't do it. What many people do is allow their anger and uncontrolled

emotions to be the driving force that assist them in making those damaging decisions which they later regret when they have cooled off and ask themselves, "what have I done"? Being persistent is another key that should be utilized throughout each day. Once again a person doesn't have to take any of these suggestions and is allowed to make their own mature decisions that best suits them. I think that it is important that any person be aware that when you submit a transfer it's not guaranteed that you will be transferred to the requested facility. You can end up at a facility which may be worse then where you were attempting to leave. I also know that everyone that submitted a transfer with a little help from those souped-up rumors need to take a close look at where they are within their recovery journey, because if rumors this wild could help you



make a decision with regards to your life imagine something just a little more believable. How would you react then?



# BENEFITS OF MMT

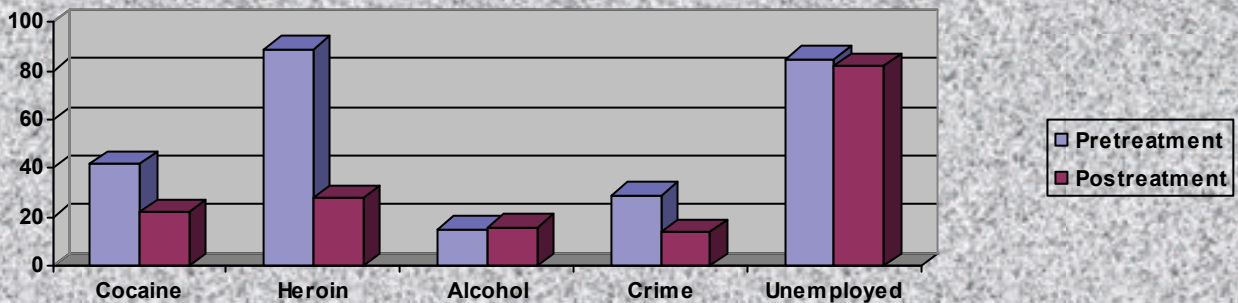
Evidence shows that continuous MMT is associated with several benefits.

\* MMT costs about \$13 per day and is considered a cost-effective alternative to incarceration (Office of National Drug Control Policy ).

\* MMT has a benefit-cost ratio of 4:1, meaning \$4 in economic benefit accrues for every \$1 spent on MMT (COMPA)

\* MMT has a significant effect on the spread of HIV/AIDS infection, hepatitis B and C, tuberculosis, and sexually transmitted diseases (COMPA ).

Heroin users are known to share needles and participate in at-risk sexual activity and prostitution, which are significant factors in the spread of many diseases. Research suggests that MMT significantly decreases the rate of HIV infection for those patients participating in MMT programs (Firshein ).



## IRISH SAYING

There are good ships, and there are wood ships, the ships that sail the sea.

But the best ships are friendships, and may they always be.

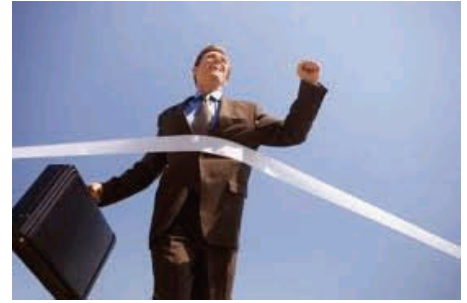
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May your home always be too small to hold all your friends.

May you get all your wishes but one,

So you always have something to strive for.

## ONE ADDICT'S PERCEPTION OF THE 12 STEPS PART 3 BY SEAN FORMAN

*If there were any way to gauge the importance of steps seven through nine for one's recovery effort, the result would be pretty high. This section of the twelve step program strengthens the very foundation of the recovery process. It also focuses on the building of awareness and the shaping of character. Steps seven through nine will help make a positive long-term development in many recovery efforts. These steps focus on establishing a better path toward future goals by directing close attention toward one's higher power, removal of shortcomings, and efforts to make amends for past actions. It is not always easy to work these steps since it involves bringing up past memories of us at our weakest. But no matter how painful it may be to work these steps, the benefits gained from them would be a priceless achievement toward a better recovery and a better way of life.*



*The first of this series of steps is step seven, which heavily relies on humility as a means to practice it. To properly remove our shortcomings we must first remember what it was like to humbly admit defeat over our ability to remain in control when we practiced step one. Now that we have worked step six and are entirely ready to have our defects removed, we now have to remove them. This step is vital because it guides us and helps us to change from that self-centered addict lifestyle from which we have grown accustomed, to a humble and open way of thinking. As an active addict I chose material desires and instant happiness over any kind of spiritual values or building of character. We always relied on ourselves to get what we wanted. A significant creator of our defects is the presence of unsatisfiable expectations and demands. This step helps us rely on our Higher Power, whatever it may be, so we can address our defects which in turn will address why we drank and used drugs in the first place. I think involving a Higher Power is necessary in this step since overcoming overwhelming compulsions and desires of superior strength can't always be done alone. Sometimes hurting one's ego in order to become humble can lead to the gaining of useful life values. It is believed that humility can ultimately help lead to sobriety and help us move on.*



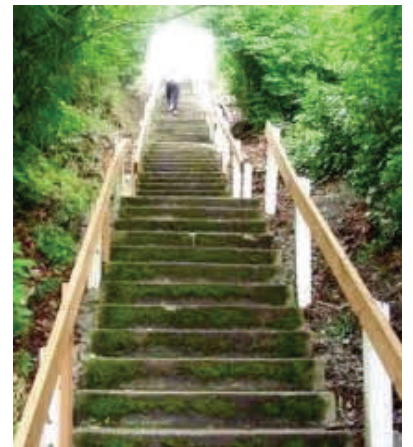
*I believe steps eight and nine are more concerned with personal relations than anything else. Even though step eight may mirror step four in some ways, I do think it is just as important. Now preparing yourself to become willing to make amends to everyone for all of your past transgressions may be one of the most difficult goals you may have. Practicing this step may bring up painful and humiliating memories. I can imagine that either fear or pride can be enough to want to skip this step.*

# ONE ADDICTS PERCEPTION OF THE 12 STEPS

BY SEAN FORMAN

*The purpose of this step is to become willing to make amends, which means being ready to swallow pride and face fear even though the prospect of being humiliated or having a difficult confrontation is present. Another difficulty is the act of taking an accurate and meticulous survey of the damage we produced during active addiction. Many people deny that they have even hurt anybody. Having a selective memory can only hurt your progress, so spare no one while making this list of people we have harmed. Reflecting on steps four and seven can also help you write the list.*

*Unfortunately there is no sure fire way to learn about acquiring forgiveness other than actually doing it. What I have learned is that forgiving those who have wronged me could help me gain forgiveness from others. Now that the preparations are made, we can start to make amends to all of the people we have wronged. Most of us have already started making amends back when we first got clean. I apologized to my closest loved ones almost immediately after my first clean day. But what does making amends mean in most cases? I basically concluded that one could make amends by either apologizing, or fulfilling past obligations. Many of us can repay outstanding debts spawned from drug use. I had several people tell me about how surprised they were with the positive responses they received. But for some people you may want to only make partial amends since it could do more harm than good. For example, if I used needles to ingest drugs but my mother didn't know I have used needles, I would only apologize for what I've done to her while I was an addict since it would worry her more if she knew I was injecting the drugs. In the more severe cases, making direct amends could do nothing but harm. One of the main goals of this step is to not buy our own peace of mind at the expense of others. It would do you well to expect negative reactions though. Even though it may be hard, it's probably better to not argue with the person you are trying to apologize to if they get mad. Some dilemmas are not so easy to solve. I found it easy to make excuses in order to avoid these difficult meetings and not so easy to talk full consequences for my past actions while regarding those I've hurt.*



*All three of these steps are milestones in the never ending path to sobriety. I cannot stress enough the value of these steps upon my own recovery effort. These are some of the most difficult steps to complete in my opinion. I think that one can never truly complete them. I also believe that these steps are an invaluable guide toward maintaining a healthy and sober life whether you are an addict or not. These steps can apply to anyone who has the motivation to practice them. Steps seven through nine are terrific guides toward shaping positive characteristics as well as a healthy and balanced way of living.*



## PRO-ACT Recovery Walks! 2011

September 24, 2011

Get involved NOW!

Wide selection of volunteer opportunities!

Always looking for ways to improve on the PRO-ACT Recovery Walks! experience for everyone, PRO-ACT is looking for volunteers to share their ideas and energy by helping out on a Walk committee. We need those with some leadership abilities to serve as committee Chairpersons and those with an interest in the tasks to serve as committee members.

We have already begun planning and forming the committees. The next meeting of the Walk Planning Committee is on Monday, February 28, 6 pm, at the PRO-ACT Recovery Training Center at 444 North 3rd Street, Suite 307, in Philadelphia. The Center is easily accessible via I-95 and there is free parking.

If you can spare a little time for one of the Walk committees below, please either come to the above meeting, call William Webb at 215-923-1661, or send an email to William at this address.

[wwebb@councilsepa.org](mailto:wwebb@councilsepa.org)

I AM ALWAYS WILLING TO LEARN

BUT NOT ALWAYS WILLING TO BE

TAUGHT



# CLASS ACTION

BY MAX FORMAN

The day that I decided to go back to school was a life changing epiphany. For about eight months, I came to the Net, drank my dose, got a bite to eat, and went home to sleep for about 8 hours. Many people do the same thing every day, and like me, go

into a depression because they have no purpose and direction in their lives. One day I

woke up. I saw a few people who seemed to have a fire in their lives. They didn't

complain about every little thing about the Net. These people weren't miserable, they didn't preach "woe is me" every two seconds, and they always seemed to be able to cheer me up. I found out that these few people either had a job, or went back to school.

I wanted that fire so bad. So I thought about going back to Community College.

I was very nervous, and like many people, I didn't think I had the confidence in me to do good. Then something occurred to me. Recovering addicts like you and me are exceptionally smart. We are extremely driven, resourceful, and hard working individuals. The only problem is, that people have talked down to us so much, that we

believe that we are worthless, stupid, and can never do anything with our lives. How

wrong they are.

So I did the necessary things to go back to CCP. I filled out my financial aid

papers, which are easy to fill out, and registered for classes. On the first day of classes, I felt so out of place. I felt like there were a thousand eyes all fixed on me. I kept thinking that someone was going to figure out that I wasn't normal. But I was very relieved to see a few familiar faces from the Net. After a few weeks, I stopped being a comfort junkie who only cares about doing things the easy way. I started to get addicted to good grades, and progress, and I found myself on the honor roll after one semester. I had truly doubted my own abilities, just as many recovering addicts do on a daily basis. Once an addict gets addicted to progress, the sky's the limit.

Not only does going to school put purpose and happiness in my life, but I found a safe haven among some students. There are SO many recovering addicts attending college whom are in the same boat as us. I am thinking about starting a recovery club at CCP, because of the huge number of recovering people. Life is too precious to waste by sitting at home and doing nothing.



(continue-CLASS ACTION)

Some people don't want to go to college. Trade schools are also a great option in furthering your life. There are so many recovering addicts and ex-offenders receiving financial grants for their schooling. They may finally get out of the misery of having a aimless life. The process to get into these schools is much easier that one might think.

I am positive that most people if not all people at the Net are completely capable of greatness. I am sure that if everyone gives themselves a little credit and shows initiative, great things will happen. Just remember, if we can conquer the perils of addiction, no other obstacle can ever hold us back from achieving things beyond our wildest dreams. We all have it in us, it's up to you to write your own destiny.

If you need help to make this steps towards a better life, just ask anyone in the Peer Advocacy Committee's office which us right next to the playroom. Progress can be your new addiction, and if you work at it now, instead of regretting that you should have done it, you can live the wonderful life that you were meant to live.

Never, never give up.



## GUARANTEED DAY SOBER BY: ED M.

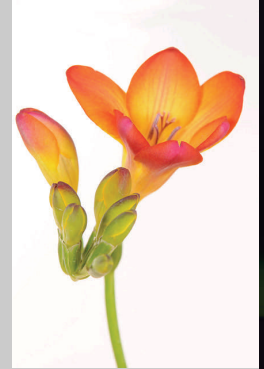
1. ASK GOD TO GRANT YOU A DAY SOBER
2. HELP ANOTHER ALCOHOLIC
3. MAKE AA MEETINGS
4. STAY AWAY FROM PEOPLE PLACES AND THINGS
5. THANK GOD FOR ANOTHER DAY SOBER

RECOVERY = 12 STEPS



## DELICATE FLOWER BY: Ryan S.

- What was once the night, its bloom so bright I cant find my way in
- The tremble of a delicate flower, a lie right in with sin
- The splendor of the hour so crude and brute, but all I wish is colorful true beauty in the eyes of what
- Breath so close to whom the smell of where I've been wreaks of sweat and sex and all that's written is my delicate flower, righteous and powerful
- A lie, a lie, another story gone bad and still in my mind this delicate flower shines, so don't come to close protection is a must
- Again and again a lost sentence from a page runs wild and I know only a few lines in a book without a name.
- Now only with this delicate flower can the story climb to the top and I become me, the king, in the end of bliss, a long kiss goodbye.



## WEB SITES TO KNOW



- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Philadelphia Workforce Development Corporation | <a href="http://www.pwdc.org">www.pwdc.org</a>   |
| 2. Community Learning Center                      | <a href="http://www.communitylearningcenter.org">www.communitylearningcenter.org</a>                           |
| 3. Center for Literacy                            | <a href="http://www.centerforliteracy.org">www.centerforliteracy.org</a>                                       |
| 4. Phila. Mental Health Center                    | <a href="http://www.Philamentalhealth.org">www.Philamentalhealth.org</a>                                       |
| 5. Child Care Info. Services                      | <a href="http://www.philadelphiachildcare.org">www.philadelphiachildcare.org</a>                               |
| 6. LIHEAP   | <a href="http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/servicesprograms/liheap/">www.dpw.state.pa.us/servicesprograms/liheap/</a> |
| 7. Project H.O.M.E.                               | <a href="http://www.projecthome.org">www.projecthome.org</a>   |
| 8. CareerLink                                     | <a href="http://www.pacareerlink.state.pa.us">www.pacareerlink.state.pa.us</a>                                 |
| 9. NA   | <a href="http://www.na.org">www.na.org</a>   |