Real Life Alcoholism and Drug Addiction Stories

What you’re about to read is a collection of real stories written by real people showing the devastation of alcoholism and drug addiction at work. Some are written by those suffering from the addiction themselves, others written from the perspective of a loved one and the affect it’s had on them and their families.

Even though many of these stories are tragic and haven’t (yet let’s hope) ended happily, being able to share our pain and hardship is ultimately what makes us all human so I’m grateful to all those who’ve had the courage to share the devastation of how alcoholism and drug addiction has impacted their lives.

The more we stand together and the more we support each other through hardship, the easier it will be for us to cope. They say a problem shared is a problem halved, and especially with the problem of addiction which still unfortunately carries a certain stigma to it, it’s important that those of us who have experienced it in whatever form, do our best to stand together.

There’s also a saying that says ‘Telling your story is medicine for the spirit and healing for the soul.’ So I encourage you too (if you haven’t yet done so) to go on and share your story like the people you are about to read about courageously have. It’s easy to do, just go to http://www.alcoholism-and-drug-addiction-help.com/alcoholism-stories.html and it’s all pretty self explanatory.

At the very least, pop in to read some more stories when you’ve got the time and leave an encouraging comment. Even a simple word of encouragement from a complete stranger on the other side of the world could make all the difference and help someone get through their day.

So thank you for downloading these stories and I hope they’ll touch you in the same way as they have me.

Take Care

Carl-Peter
Christine: How My Addiction to Cocaine and Alcohol Left Me on the Streets

I was brought up in a good home and I always said I'd never do drugs, alcohol or cigarettes. Lesson number one: Never say never. In my 20's I moved to the UK to study, and was soon flying high as an international aerobics and weight-training professional, as well as sub-editor.

I was 25 when I first started dabbling in cocaine. Its allure was enormous - all the achievers around me were doing it socially. I was told it would make me work well and that it would help my creativity. All of this fed my ego, and I was soon sucked in, big time. The trouble with my cocaine habit was that when I was coming down, I needed to have something to 'balance the books', so within a short time I was a chronic alcoholic too.

Few people manage to experience in a lifetime what I experienced in 5 years using cocaine and alcohol. While many people around me realised I had an alcohol problem, I managed to hide my cocaine addiction. I was ashamed about doing drugs, but for some reason felt I could get away with being labelled an alcoholic. Gradually I lost everything due to my bad behaviour, inability to deliver and zero credibility: my friends, my job, my money.

Then my parents passed away and I came home to an inheritance. I married the first man who told me I was gorgeous, only to discover that he had a gambling problem. Once the money was gone our marriage fell apart. Our three children we aged 3, 2 and 1 when social services threatened to take them. I'd lost my home and realised I was an unfit Mother, so I gave them to my husband's parents to raise.

When you hit rock bottom - a homeless, penniless drug addict and alcoholic - you usually become a prostitute or you steal. I found a 3rd option - taking people to the drug dealers. It's how I supported my addictions and became a white woman living on the Cape Flats, protected by the gangs.

I've never hated myself more than the day I took 16-year old girl to the drug dealers. She came from a good home and 24 hours later she was dead from a tainted dose. But I was so chemically dependent that I was unable to pull myself out of the hell I was in.

Of course I tried to stop, every single day. I sometimes made it till 10am, but would be so ill, screaming, tearing at my skin and hallucinating, that I'd start all over again.

This was my life till the mid 90's when I met Peter. We made a fine pair. He had a bad drinking problem and was also homeless, but for the very first time we were able to share our stories. We moved to a new area where we lived on the streets. I was bloated, looked awful, and in deep, deep trouble.

Lesson number two: Never stand in judgement of anyone else. That's what I learned when a prostitute took pity on me, gave me the keys to her home and told me to go there because 'God wants you to get clean.'
I so badly wanted to clean up but I was terrified. I'd been there before and knew the side-effects. It's the worst experience imaginable. But Peter and I took her advice and I can only describe what followed as miraculous. We stopped cold turkey together. However we didn't have a single side-effect except two drastic temperature changes that took us from extremely hot to extremely cold.

That was 14 years ago - and we've been clean ever since. It hasn't been easy. It took four and half years working day by day to turn my life around physically, emotionally and spiritually, filling all those empty spaces.

I'd visited countless rehab centres on my previous attempts to quit, and now I took the opportunity to start applying what I had learned as I slowly reclaimed my life. When people ask me now how we got through that first night, I tell them honestly - We prayed.

Peter and I have been married for 7 years and we now run an NGO, which offers educational and drug prevention programmes. Today we embrace healthy living and lead balanced lives. I fought for my children and got them back, and I feel blessed being surrounded by loving family. I travel the country sharing my story, although I always re-iterate that mine isn't the only way.

There are many different roads to recovery, whether with or without assistance. My fervent hope for addicts is never to say that it can't be done. Because as I've discovered, if you want it badly enough, you can make it happen, as long as you have the faith to take it on.
Ron’s Remorse ... and Incredible Story of Recovery

My story begins just like many others born in the 50's. I got caught up in the madness of the late 60's with all the drugs available on the streets. Marijuana, speed and acid were most prevalent in my town and there were plenty of people using back then ...

Being that I have an addictive nature, it did not take me long to fall into a routine of constant abuse of these drugs. Marijuana was my drug of choice through all the years of my addiction, but speed was relied upon when I worked long hours as a taxi driver. I would break down and inject a pharmaceutical speed called Perludin and be able to drive 10-18 hours per day and still function well enough to never get in an accident or come under the scrutiny of the police.

Years passed and I continued to work as a functioning drug abuser until the early years of the 80’s. I believe it was 1982 or so that I was injured severely in a fight I started when I stopped a guy from stabbing his girlfriend in my brother’s home. During the fight which eventually involved over ten guys and myself, I was injured by three guys wrapped up in each other grappling with each other, and then they fell on my right leg as I was facing the other way fighting with another guy. When they landed on my leg they tore out my anterior crucial ligament and destroyed my ring cartilage in my knee, all at once. Sudden unbelievable pain rocketed to my brain and I was out of the fight.

After 4 surgeries and many hours in rehab, I came out of it with a pain killer addiction that would last till 2009. I had quit drinking when I was 50 by taking a machete and almost chopping my left hand off at the wrist. I was desperate and knew I needed a shock to help me kick the worst addiction I ever fought in my life.

While in the alcoholic rehab in the hospital, I was asked by the surgeons why I took such a drastic measure to end my drinking, I replied, "in the Bible it says, "If thine right eye offends thee, pluck it out. Better to enter the Kingdom of Heaven with one eye, than never enter at all". I may be a little off on the verse, but they knew what I meant. To show they did and to help me with my quest, they performed the operation to sew all the tendons of my left hand back to my wrist and offered to do it all for free. I never received a bill for it.

As time went on my addiction to the pain killers got bigger and so did my search for other drugs as well. I then got into crack cocaine for two years with the help of an acquaintance of mine that always bought an 1/8 ounce - or two each time and wanted to share it with me for free. He was a good friend of mine and did not feel comfortable sharing with anyone else. Thus I got high for free. All in all I got to the point that my life - my marriage - and my self respect were at an all time low. My wife was ready to leave me and I was no good to anyone as a reliable person.

It suddenly came down to me realizing that just because I had quit drinking I was still an addict. So, I told my doctor I was done with all the pain meds and that I would work on training my brain to ignore the chronic pain and to do something if and when severe, abnormal pain arose to plague me. As I write this, I am pain killer free and use only a muscle relaxer to ease leg cramps I get from work and because of a liver enzyme problem my doc and I are working on to end. I use the drug maybe once in three or four days when the cramps become unbearable. I still do not drink after 7 years.
I guess my point in writing this is to say that you have to develop a "mind set" or a stubborn streak against an addiction and really want to end it. A person hitting their low is the start of this. I was so low - everything looked up to me.
I Beat two of the Worst Addictions (Heroin & Crystal Meth) but now a Medication my Doctor gave me has Knocked me back down to the floor and this time I'm Dying but still can't get up

I will first start off by introducing myself, my name is Nicole and I have been a struggling addict for the last five years of my thirty-two that I have been alive. I was really never educated on the facts of drug addiction because it simply didn't happen to normal people such as myself, or so I thought.

I experienced the biggest reality check I think there was in a position such as mine. I grew up with my mother, she was and still is my best friend. My father was around but he is more like a stranger than a parent or friend. My whole life I was the "fat" kid, because of that I had few friends throughout school.

I have suffered with depression from as far back as I can remember, because of that and all the attempts to kill myself I was put into dozens of mental hospitals. Looking back now, starting from the first attempt I took on my life, it was never really that I wanted to die but it was I wanted attention. I am still not sure of what type of attention I wanted or expected to receive from such a foolish act but I do know I did not want to die.

I can't really pinpoint where it all went wrong cause in a way I feel there was always something not normal about me as a person. I was an honours student up until the ninth grade, for some reason when I entered high school I gave up all the dreams I ever had about my future plans of going to college and becoming a marine biologist. I dropped out before the end of the first semester of my freshman year.

Even in that time period, I still did not use drugs, smoke cigarettes, or take a sip of alcohol. And it wasn't that it was never put in front of me because it was many times. Why I never tried drugs then was because I had no desire to do so, there was no sort of temptation whatsoever.

I'm going to move ahead a couple of years because if I stay this pace I will never be able to finish. So much to tell! Couple of years after dropping out and doing absolutely nothing productive with my life I started dating a man who we will just call "J". He was an awesome guy and I quickly fell in love with him. The relationship prior to him was abusive and "J" was like an angel that saved me from getting knocked around everyday. Our relationship had its up and down like all relationships do but for the most part things were good. I remember then how unhappy I was because of the routine of life.

Be careful for what you wish for cause it isn't always better on the other side. SO TRUE! "J" did have a heroin addiction for many years but when we got together he stopped. We were together five years before I found a needle in his jeans one day while doing laundry. He tried to give all the excuses there were but he knew that I knew what was up. Shortly after that I went and got a procedure done called gastro-by-pass. I was overweight and this was going to be the answer to everything. It ended up becoming the worst mistake I ever made, each month I was loosing weight and gaining more and more confidence in myself.
Six months after my surgery I again was doing the dirty laundry and found another needle. It may sound nuts but I was totally heart broken, I compare to how I felt that day to how a woman feels when she catches her man making out with another guy.

When he got home we had one big fight and by the end of that night I had snorted a bag of heroin. I couldn't compete with a drug, another woman maybe, but not a drug! That's what was going through my mind the first time I used. That was the first time I ever used any type of drug in my whole life but not the last....

From then on we used together everyday, things progressed fast and soon I was also using a needle to get high. Then not to long after that we started breaking the law daily just to get us " well " until the next day came. By that time I didn't have to worry about being the " fat " one in the room anymore because I was severely underweight. I was then called a walking skeleton.

Then " J " ended up going to prison for five years. The day he was arrested was the very last day I touched that drug, I went cold turkey and I still am drug free from heroin. I think about it now and I get physically sick. He was only locked up about three months before I DID meet the LOVE OF MY LIFE and its name was crystal meth.

First time I used it I was hooked and I was not stopping for no one not even my mother. I became an evil person and I cared about no one but my drug. It only took about a year or so before I went too far with my addiction. I committed some bad crimes that handed me a year in the womens state prison.

As far as meth is concerned, I am unable to say I hate it because there is a part in me that loves that drug and wants nothing more then to be apart of it again. But so far I have been able to keep that piece of me buried deep inside of me and I don't plan on letting it out ever again. If I did there is one simple fact and that is I will not stop again until it takes my life away.

After I was released from prison I was able to stay clean about one week before I became an alcoholic for about three months. During that time I was blacked out every day by noon and those three months are like a big blur in my memory. Again one day I woke up and decided not to drink any more so I didn't. That simple

Then one day at my head doctor he wrote me a prescription for a drug called addorall because he said I had a.d.h.d I did not know that this drug was a legal version of the drug I really loved (meth), but it didn't take long before I found out and that was all she wrote.

I was back into a active addiction and two years later here I am still and my addiction to these pills are out of control. I need help because I am going to die soon if not. I am getting sicker and sicker by the week. I don't want to die but I don't want to live anymore either. I NEED HELP....
**Katherine’s Story: How My Boyfriend’s Addiction to Heroin Almost Destroyed Me**

Most ‘straight’ people don’t fall in love with drug addicts or if they do, are wise enough not to pursue their passion.

It took me a year to reassess my life after he fled overseas, leaving me to live as he put it, “without his monkey on my back,” but it’s been the most nourishing one yet.

Two years ago I celebrated my 37th birthday by starting an underpaid job, which most people would probably see as punishment. But most people didn’t spend their 36th birthday in prison after a policeman had arrested my boyfriend and I after finding traces of Heroin in my car.

Bits of my once-venturous soul reappear like excerpts from a forgotten movie, and the days when I’m not dogged by panic attacks I find joy in the simplest pleasures.

I was a goner the moment I met him. Philosophical, cool, with an enigmatic energy and eyes that penetrated my soul. The entry in my diary the day I decided to sub-let my house to him read: “Just the kind of guy who could break my heart.”

I dubbed him Fire Horse because of his Chinese and Western Astrological signs. Our meeting led to a lunch invitation, then to impromptu discussions about life and even a midnight trip to a festival. A musician of sorts, he said he was on his way to New York to make it big in music.

In those early, idealistic months, I thought his weekend chase of the dragon (heroin smoked on tin foil bought from merchants who delivered to our door) was merely recreational, until occasional hits to ‘enhance creativity’ turned into daily must-haves and money started disappearing fast.

Weeks turned into months, his productivity decreased as his senses dulled. So we moved to another City where he felt he could make more money. It was here that I realised the extent of his addiction. He literally couldn’t function without it and would lie writhing in pain when he had no fix.

When money didn’t come in and his absences grew longer, followed by self destructive rages, threats of suicide and night-long crack binges, my survival instincts kicked in and I dropped him at his parents place.

Toxic psychosis was where he was at; a puppet on a string, he was performing for the god of crack – which he took to counter the lethargic effect of heroin.

After a year apart, in which he spent time at a notorious rehab centre (known for their extreme methods), he resolved to stay clean and I agreed to move in with him on that condition. But this rehab had only increased his angst – he told me they’d beaten him up for challenging their belief in God – and it didn’t take him long to hit the H again, which he had started injecting.
I had vowed I would never let him use my salary for drugs but I was weak. I pawned my computer to pay the rent and eventually lost my job.

Six months down the line, my life was spinning out of control. I rationalised that his drug-taking wasn’t so bad if it could be moderated. I handled the finances. I even envied his ability to slip into euphoric states while maintaining a sane façade.

We found an idyllic cottage with a peaceful air. But our seedy neighbourhood, protected by its cartel of drug lords, was far too close for comfort.

Our house became a stopover for all manner of junkies, from once-successful businessmen to gentle souls who hated their lives but were powerless to the lure of heroin and crack. Fire Horse became Saviour of the Junkies. Perhaps his big, sensitive heart was his biggest downfall.

After being driven to shoplifting (to bail a fellow junkie out of jail), Fire Horse did another stint in rehab and tried to quit by using methadone, a medicinal heroin replacement. In vain. We were thrown out of our cottage when the landlady found a child playing with a syringe.

He found a rent-free squat next door to a bunch of junkies. I had stuck by him for so long, and convinced my family that we were getting somewhere, that there was no way I could admit defeat now.

Despite daily raging rows, I still believed that things could change and that I could not live without him. With the new accommodation came the inhabitants and the endless quest for the next fix. There were constant arguments about who had stolen whose smack, as well as endless quest for veins, which start to disappear after a couple of years’ usage.

Needless for ankles, necks, groins, were stashed with ragged tourniquets fashioned from scarves, shoelaces, anything available, in ‘first aid’ boxes made from spectacle cases or tobacco pouches.

Grandiose criminal plots materialised into café raids of chocolate slabs – one intrepid junkie was bust with 50 in his trouser leg before being let off gently with six whips by an irate shop owner – because they were always too stoned to think further than the day’s requirements.

A vicious cycle of hands-to-vein subsistence interspersed with vague commitments to rehab before the drug killed them. One of the, an innocent-looking girl, joined an escort agency to pay for her habit.

I was living in a twilight zone, somewhere between wild nightmares of being tied down by addicts and paranoid reality – would they get bust, where would the next cent come from, would the drug lords to whom he owed money shoot him? How long could I live like this?
Eventually my car broke down and we pawned it. Fire Horse was forced to ask his parents for help, and went through rehab for the fourth time in two years. Staying with his parents, he was forced to be accountable, and I began to find my way again.

I got a good job and we rented a cottage on his parents’ premises, but the battle was only beginning. He hooked up with an old buddy of his, who had lost a successful business as well as his family through heroin addiction.

Though his drug use became more controlled and he was on the road most of the day, making legitimate money as an art dealer – he was down to $30 a day (a bag of Thai White and a rock of crack) instead of $100 – it didn’t stop.

Three days before my 36th birthday, the walls came down. Accompanying him in the car to make sure his fix didn’t progress into a binge and that my new car stayed safe, I was also arrested.

The police would not believe I was innocent, despite being body searched and my plea to do a blood test. We spent a weekend in jail and were bailed out by our parents on my birthday. It was the turning point. An epiphany.

My life with Fire Horse flashed before my eyes. But still, I knew for him the main issue would be avoiding the pain of cold turkey and I spent the weekend trying to get out of the holding cell to make calls to get him heroin.

Lying on a thin piece of foam in the cell among petty thieves who told me ‘It’s all part of life’, I felt sick at the hypocrisy of it all. The real victims were his long suffering mother, his desperate dad, and my family and friends who were sick at the sight of what I had become.

And then there was my part in it all: lying to keep the peace, save my soul, protect his, hoping the lie would become the truth. When he got out, virtually unable to walk, he whispered ‘Je t’aime’ in lieu of a birthday wish. But the date signified the end of a chapter. The dream was over.

I’ve spoken to him a few times since he left. The third time, after no Christmas or New Year call, he phoned me from a London hospital with double pneumonia. He told me he’d nearly lost his life in the drug-wracked cold out there, and that he was going to rehab. He sounded old and sad, and wanted me to come to London.

Torn between my feelings and doing the responsible, necessary thing, I said I didn’t believe him and I knew he’d never be clean. For days after my body was wracked with pain, as if going cold turkey myself.

A year later, I still felt like half a person. Fire Horse was an all-consuming passion who filled a void. Perhaps I needed him to be my scapegoat for the demons I find difficult to deal with alone. Heroin kept him warm, and he kept me warm.
I refute any claims that heroin can be used constructively. Nearly all users become hoooked in six weeks of daily use. It starts out as a euphoric sensual adventure, but plays on vulnerabilities, deceives sensibilities and turns into the most destructive, manipulative mistress in the world. Anyone who shares a life with a heroin addict will go down with them. I still have the scars.

It would be easy to say my world was shattered by a heroin addict. But instead he taught me how precious life is. Five years ago, I would have fought for freedom of choice and legalising heroin, for junkie rights and the jailing of fascist rehab owners.
Hitting The Bottom - The Crash and Burn Philosophy and My Daughter's Harrowing Tale of Addiction to Heroin

I am struggling terribly with the hitting bottom approach. I also have a daughter who is an IV Heroin user. She turns 21 today. What a birthday!

She has gone through 3 residential rehabs and 5 sober living houses. She hasn't stayed clean for more than 5 months since the age of 15. (Using IV Heroin only over the last year). She says she wants a real life and a relationship with her family and to become a person of integrity. Yet she is terribly depressed even on Suboxone and other psych meds, and tends to hide in sleep as much as she is allowed.

She has a hard time believing she will ever find happiness without drugs. And although I think she believes it when she says she wants to get well, She is flakey and unaccountable, misses appointments, attends meeting but has a hard time being fully engaged and eventually makes the wrong friends at meetings or in recovery and goes out, stealing from those she loves to buy her drug.

So I have been trying to pull back, let go and god and all that, and accept the fact that I know she is selling her body for drugs and lucky if she eats a piece of bread in a day. So today... she just divulged to me that she went home with a man that takes "care" of girls in her position, giving them money for drugs and food in exchange for service. He has a room set up with chains and a swing and handcuffs and about 6 computers with porn on the screen. He walks around naked and locks her in a room "so she won't steal". He told her that she needs to get permission to leave ...

I understand that most people feel that this may be a good thing and that now she may finally reach her bottom (probably after being raped and beaten and robbed of her phone, wallet and car keys, so that she will be cut off from contact with the outside world. But if she gets out she will have really learned a lesson. Maybe.

So I broke the cardinal rule because I figure what good is this marvelous lesson if she just winds up dead or if he keeps her drugged and captive and never lets her our of there. So I pleaded with her to get out of there. I told her if she goes back there I will call the police. This guy is sick and twisted and dangerous. As we were speaking, she got a call from a friend from her last treatment program who miraculously remembered her birthday and invited her to come and let him cook her dinner and stay the night. Her "master" reluctantly let her out, keeping her GPS for collateral.

It just makes me sick that this is the best "treatment" we can come up with. There must has to be another way. Its like research in this area isn't valued because after all were just dealing with a bunch of lying dirty addicts.

There is a drug - actually it is from the bark of a root from the Iboga plant - called Ibogaine. It was approved for clinical trials years ago by the FDA. A Doctor from the University of Miami was conducting the research had remarkable results but ran out of money and hasn't been able to find funding for further clinical trials. It is successfully being used in Mexico and Canada and numerous
other countries.

This drug was actually reported to in most cases, arrest the addiction - reset the computer so to speak, often with only 1 treatment. I don't know what the potential of this drug may be - how cost effective it may be, all of the risks, ect., but it has changed lives for many and deserves to be studied.

We as a society have let down those suffering from this disease. We recognize that it is a disease, and that when actively using they are out of their minds and incapable of making a rational choice. And yet we criticize their poor choices.

We know that Heroine addicts have a 10% chance of recovery, yet we still are OK telling them go out and crash and burn and in hopes that the light may go on IF THEY LIVE (after all they are so resourceful and crafty that they just might be in the lucky 10%).

We hear the miraculous stories of the ones that make it but the ones who didn't don't show up to speak at meetings. But its all OK because they own their choices and we did everything we could. Or did we??

Yes I sound angry and hurt and scared...because I am.
The Dance of Addiction

My daughter has been battling addiction from the age of 15. She is 20 now. I belong to Toastmasters and decided it was time to write a speech telling my story.

I felt that I could express myself and reach others if I entered the International Speech contest. I won at the club level and the area level, going on to win 2nd place at the Division level. I know that winning 1st place there would have required a happier more inspirational ending. I don't yet have an ending... only hope.

But that's OK. Winning was never the goal. Telling my story and touching others was what I needed. So, here is my speech... the story of a mother and a daughter.

THE DANCE OF ADDICTION

She was flyaway and curly and every night at bedtime she stood at the foot of her bed and named all of the people that she loved and then she'd count to three and dive into bed. That was then and now is not.

She peers with hollow eyes into the life of a grown up and turns away. She trades away the love of her family for a feel good moment and the hope of tomorrow dissolves into dust that floats up her nose.

Ashes to ashes; dust to dust. Once a happy girl full of kisses and promises, now delivering strategic kisses and broken promises that fall to the ground like withered leaves unable to cling to the branches that gave them life.

I reach for her to stay her course but she pulls away from me to forge her own path through some enchanted forest where demons reign and ghosts wait to inhabit her.

She finds comfort in a world where the days are short and the nights are long - and she tries to remember the names of the people she loves but the names linger - in some other world - in some other time - in some other self. So she counts to three and they are lost as she falls into a dream from which she doesn't want to wake.

This is the song of a mother and a daughter ...

This is the dance of addiction.

The AMA has defined addiction as a disease. Yet many still see it as simply bad behavior. Unfortunately, unlike cancer or diabetes, addiction changes our brain chemistry, our thought processes, our behaviors, causing the addict to act without conscience and without regard to consequence.

But consequences there are. The standing joke in recovery is, "How do I know that I am allergic to
drugs?" Because whenever I use, I break out in felonies!"

Addiction is a progressive devastating illness that affects not only the addict but the whole family.

It is painful to love an addict. I spend endless hours tending to her life because she won't. I struggle to control her disease, unaware that I am living my own disease.

And its not until I take a moment and look back and realize how long it's been since I've taken a breath, that I see I am lost in the life that she abandoned; forgetting my own dreams ...

MY Dreams full of HOW and WHEN but never IF. Because anything was possible before this nightmare began - HER nightmare that I can't wake from.

Still, I vow to be her life support and breathe for her until she can breathe on her own - to love her until she learns to love herself. So, every day I WAIT for the smile, and WATCH for the look, hoping for the OK on her face so that I can be OK too.

All the while, I am consumed with fear and I want rescue her and take her away, as if I could keep her safe by removing her, pretending that the demons are OUT THERE and not inside of her.

I go round and round and round with her on a carousel of hope and fear until I'm dizzy from my steps, and my world is spinning and I don't know what's right anymore.

I am cold and tired and I can no longer see though frozen tears.

HEARTBREAK; BOW BREAK; CRADLE FALL;

I give up and give in. I let go and let God. After all these years I finally release my grasp. After denial has run its course and laughed in my face, I get it.

After the pleading and the begging and the bargaining and threatening; after praying and hoping, and not one single thing that I have done or NOT done has helped her come home to herself.

I watch her fall like a leaf in the wind, and though my heart breaks, I don't reach out to catch her.

Reality has melted my tears and I see clearly now. I speak words that I never imagined would come from my mouth. I learn about boundaries. I change the locks on the doors. This is my gift to her. I allow her to free-fall so that she might find wings and choose to fly.

And so I close my eyes and hope and pray that she will reach deep into her heart and count to three, and finally remember the names of the people she loves, that she will take a leap of faith and grab onto the naked branch of today trusting that its leaves will bloom again.

And then maybe she will wake up and do it again, and again, until one day she holds a bouquet of tomorrows, gathered one by one, one day at a time.
This is the story of a mother and a daughter. This is the dance of addiction.

SIDE NOTE: My daughter is currently in rehab. Again. She had come home in December “for a new start” after the house she was staying in was raided. She was arrested on 3 counts and spent a month in a county rehab facility. I was full of hope that these real life consequences had finally helped her reach her “bottom”. However, my heart fell as it became apparent to me that she was still living her disease.

I lovingly had to tell her that she could not stay with me anymore. I had discovered that she was using...again. IV Heroine had become her drug of choice. I could not watch her destroy herself any longer. I also had to take care of me. My own health and family relationships were being compromised. And I did not feel safe in my own home.

I found myself hiding medications, car keys, and money. I told her I loved her but could not support her addiction. I talked with her and helped her look at options. There weren’t many.

Although it wasn’t what I wanted for her, I encouraged her to continue using if she wasn't done. It just couldn't be in my home. She considered living in "her" car but I explained I could not allow her to keep the car (my car that I had been letting her use), as the prospect of her driving wasn't safe for her or for others on the road.

She had no real friends to turn to. It would be a life on the streets. A life of using others for drugs and being used by others. A life of stealing to get high and eventual death or incarceration.

She began to consider long term rehab possibilities and she made the decision to return to a quality women’s residential program, where she had spent time a little more than a year ago.

She had to fight with her HMO to get them to pay for it again, as she had “a history” with them and they did not believe she was serious or trust her motives. She stood her ground though. She did everything they asked her to do. Her request was approved.

She is nearly a month into it and happy there. She feels she is learning so much... things that she wasn't listening to or was not ready to hear the 1st time she was there.

She is bonding with women and receiving much needed one-on-one therapy as well. I have given her Book One of CWG and it has helped her find her "higher power". That is a concept integral to the world of recovery and one that she has always struggled with.

I am hopeful that her journey brings her to a place of peace and self discovery and that she can finally let go of the fear that has guided her life. I know that she must walk her own path and I truly believe that everything unfolds exactly the way its supposed to. This belief helps me let go of fear and greet each day with hope.

Hope. That is what I have today. Not a guarantee for tomorrow. Not a remarkable and inspiring happy ending. I have today. And I have hope. And I have faith. What more could I really ask for?
The Insanity of Drug and Alcohol Addiction at Work

I'm 55 now and have gone back and forth between drinking and tenuous sobriety since 1981. My drinking & the associated behavior has resulted in the destruction of 3 marriages, damaged the lives of those women, former girl friends, my 2 daughters as well as other family members.

My drinking--and inability to function well in the world while sober for as much as 6 years--ruined my career and has left me with a life filled with so much pain that suicide has seemed like a really good idea on too many occasions to count. I've been to countless AA meetings and 4 different treatment centers, yet up until a few weeks ago I was still drinking and driving while intoxicated on a frequent basis and while extremely intoxicated occasionally. You'd think that I would know better than to be so irresponsible and stupid and you'd be right. But it took Lori to show me the truth about myself and finally convince me that I have absolutely no business picking up another drink.

I met her at a bar that I frequented. She had lived in the nearby trailer park for about a month and I knew she wasn’t a bar fly because I spent a lot of time there and hadn't ever seen her before. She's much younger than me, has pretty blue eyes, a beautiful pony tail reaching down to her belt line and a fine figure, and she was obviously in distress. She told me that she had been paroled from prison and that a mean lady at the testing center where she had to provide urine samples had wrongfully accused her of trying to cheat--twice, which put her in trouble with the parole office. She said that she had been wrongfully convicted and been given an unusually harsh sentence because her ex-boyfriend (and father of her daughter) was well connected with the Mormon church through his own father, a high ranking member. She was given a choice between reporting to a half way house or returning to prison by her P.O. She chose to run instead, rather than be subjected to one of those horrible half way houses.

So here I am, lonely from losing my third wife and very attractive to the damsel in distress who drinks like I do. I was really psyched! I soon had her moving into my big empty house and she immediately took on the role of spouse. I was happy, for about the first week. I'm still working so I dare not drink all day and at first I thought she was just a little dingy, but I soon realized that she drank up to 30 beers a day and ate very little. She would argue about nearly everything and get enraged over minor issues.

Then came the bar fight that she instigated, I escalated, and I ended up being tackled over a wooden fence by a big cowboy she had been flirting with and she ended up with a gun pulled on her. The next morning she took off with my truck without my permission, got very drunk and drove it in spite of efforts to talk her out of it. Then she almost burned my house down by putting an oversized log in my fire place then passing out on the couch. I returned home one day to find her very drunk. She had burned dinner, was trying to cut food with the knife upside down and she claimed she had only had 2 beers. When I questioned her on that, she flew into a rage.

I began looking at her arrest and imprisonment records: 6 felony DUIs with BLA averaging about .25%. Arrested several times, jailed at the county for 4 months, violated probation, sent to prison for about a year, violated parole, sent back to prison, released on parole again, then violated again, and
here she was living in my house. She can't even visit her own, beautiful daughter, and her ex has a permanent order of protection against her based on numerous arrests for domestic violence--against him.

I thought about how insane it is for her to suffer such terrible consequences and in spite of the potential for being caught and sent back to prison with additional time for new violations, then to take my truck and drive extremely drunk on a revoked drivers license. Then I realized that when I drive extremely drunk, I could kill innocent people and spend the rest of my days in prison. The only difference between us is that she's been caught, and I haven't been yet.

I thought about how insane her behavior is--this pretty little woman can't even see her own daughter. Yet I had driven my second wife to move 2,000 miles away with my two daughters because of the insanity of my behavior. So what's the difference? There is no difference.

I saw Lori destroying herself, and for the first time I understood what my ex-wives have been trying to tell me all these years--that I've been destroying myself and the people in my with alcohol just like she is.

I realized that the chemical that both of us use alcohol in a feeble attempt to make ourselves feel OK really was the powerful depressant that made both of us want to die--just like the doctors and counselors have been saying all along.

And I saw the glaring ugliness of her alcoholism and for the first time I saw it in myself.

After a few days of my being sober and her getting progressively worse, I made arrangements with the sheriffs department to arrest her at my house and return her to prison. They let me go in and talk to her while they waited out of site. I told her what I had done and why I had done it: To try and save her life by getting her sober once more, thereby giving her an opportunity to stay sober and recover, to protect myself from the things she does while drunk, and to protect the public which is what the state has been trying to do all along.

I told her to surrender with dignity, rather than fight them like she has done in past. She was angry and very upset, but she did the right things. The deputies were kind and gentle. The older deputy told her that they don't want to lock her up two weeks before Christmas. They want to see her get sober, get her license back get a job and be reunited with her daughter. They want to see her some day, bouncing her grand daughter on her knee. And he said she could have it all if she makes the right choice and sees this as a new beginning.

I cried when she took off her jewelry and handed it to me. I held her arms out while the young deputy put the cuffs out in front rather than in back because she had been so cooperative. I put her in the squad car and my big puppy jumped in to lick her face. And I told her that they would all be here, just bigger, waiting for her to come back.

Since then I have had lengthy conversations with her parole officer, a woman who told me to pack her stuff up, put it in storage and let her know where she can find it. She told me not delude myself
into thinking there's any chance Lori will recover because she doesn't want to. She said that she has seen many men try to rescue women like her and they always end up with their lives in ruins as these women drag them down.

I spoke to her ex-boy friend (the father of her daughter) who was with her for seven years. He gave me the same advice, and went on to explain how he and his family had tried to help her but that she just wants to stay drunk and party until she dies. Just like she told me. He corrected a lot of the stories Lori had told me and I realized that he is not the monster that she made him out to be, in fact he's a decent guy who's getting married soon. The daughter doesn't want to have anything to do with her, which is the same way my daughters feel about me. He said it's really sad, but there's nothing anyone can do to help her because she just doesn't want to recover and the best place for her to be is in prison where she can't do much harm to herself or others.

I know that they're probably right, but it's difficult if not impossible for me to accept that advice and give up on her without trying to save her with the help of women in AA and other resources her ex didn't have or know about. Maybe it's because I can see the real person behind the alcoholism, like my 3rd wife could see in me. Maybe it's because I feel a debt of gratitude for her having spurred a spiritual awakening in me, saving my life or the lives of innocents I might have taken. Or maybe it's because I sent her back to prison and told her I would take care of her things and be there for her when she got out. Or maybe I'm just plain stupid. But I refuse to give up on her without trying, nor will I not let her take me down after being lifted up. We need your prayers.
My 23 Year Old Son is Destroying His Life with Drinking - 7 Years Now & Counting

My 23 year old son started drinking from the age of 15. (so far as we know, could have been earlier)

My daughter (now 28, a college grad, wonderful productive girl!) and I are beside ourselves trying to deal with him and his destructive, some times dangerous behavior.

He has had 3 DUI's since the age of 16 and has gone through several 30 day treatment programs, counseling & AA meetings. Nothing has worked.

At one point he asked us to please get him help, he has been periodically suicidal. He was raised in a good home, his father and I were loving parents & he attended school in a very good public school system.

We had lots of problems with him beginning at the age of 15. Prior to that he was a straight A student, we had such high hopes for his future.

He is now spiralling out of control. I had to kick him out of the house last June because he was becoming increasingly belligerent & angry all the while drinking alone in the basement rec room, taking our cars in the middle of the night.

I lived in fear of what would happen next, hiding car keys, searching the house for hidden alcohol. His behavior became threatening after the last DUI which was March 2008.

While all of this was getting worse I learned his father (my husband of 28 years) had developed terminal cancer. This happened when my son was a senior in high school (fall of 2003) and the 3 year battle that followed for my husbands life did not help my sons problems.

I dealt with all of this the best way I possibly could. I was forced to watch my husband deteriorate & then die in Aug. 2006. As a result of the medical bills and trying to support my family on my income alone I almost lost the house and was forced to file bankruptcy.

Currently there seems to be no hope in sight for my son. He cannot hold down a job, has dropped out of school multiple times. Any time there is the slightest problem (his hours were cut back to 6 hours a week the last job he had) he uses that as an excuse to hit the bottle.

Most often he drinks alone as he is often ashamed of what he is doing but does not seem to care what it is doing to his family. In fact he is usually angry when I finally get to talk to him.

He will soon loose his apartment as he cannot pay his bills and mostly I am afraid for his life at this point. I cannot have him out on the street but I have no idea how I can live with this again in my home.

He refuses to cooperate in any way, has overdrawn his checking account 12 times in the past 2
weeks purchasing alcohol. I called the bank asking them to please stop allowing the overdrafts &
close his account (he uses his debit card).

I was told they will continue to pay the debits & charge the fees until 30-45 days have passed and
then they will simply send it to collections. Is there any hope or anyway we can deal with this? He
has no medical insurance.
Steve's Story: Alcohol is Killing Me

Alcohol has been my companion for the best part of 20 years now. My relationship with alcohol started off as a casual fling, like it does with most people I guess. Purely recreational, to make meeting friends after work, dinner parties and weekend barbecues more enjoyable.

I was during this period lucky enough to meet and fall in love with the most amazing woman and have two beautiful children. It felt like life couldn't get much better. Alcohol however continued to be my constant companion through all of this, but always manageable I felt, even if my wife thought I didn't need to drink as much as I did.

My father was an alcoholic and I was always very aware of how that effected our family. My parents ultimately divorced because of that and growing up in an alcoholic household affected both my sister and I deeply. My father ended up dying 10 years ago due to an alcohol induced stroke at the age of 52 and that really shook me up.

So even though I've always liked to drink, I tried to be careful about not going over the 'edge' if you know what I mean.

About 7 years into my marriage, things started to get a little rocky. I guess that happens at some point in most relationships. You probably take each other a little for granted and don't put in the effort you should.

My wife and I started fighting more. She felt I wasn't paying her enough attention. I felt she was nagging unnecessarily. And so things continued on a slippery slope for the next couple of years. Regular fights mixed with the odd period of calm in-between.

I just ended up drinking more, but still figured I had things under control and always thought that somehow things between my wife and I would eventually work out because I did still love her. Looking back now, why I thought that I don't know because I wasn't making any effort to improve things between us.

Then the bombshell hit. I can still remember the day clear as night. I got home from work one day and my wife had her suitcase packed and said she was leaving me - and taking the kids with her. She'd met someone else. Apparently she'd been having an affair for the last 6 months already.

At first I begged her to stay. Promised I would try harder and make more effort. She said it was too late. Didn't love me anymore. And then I got angry. Said I would fight her for the kids and make sure she got as little as possible from a divorce.

It got ugly and got to the point where we couldn't even speak to each other except through our lawyers. God, what this must've done to the kids I don't know, and I'll carry that guilt with me forever.

She got custody of course and I would have the kids one night during the week and every other
weekend, with the provision that my drinking remain under control.

But something inside me during this period just died. Alcohol became my best friend, my comfort, to help ease the pain. A 'few' drinks everyday became a bottle. And over the last 5 years as a result my life has become a living hell.

My kids wanted to stop seeing me because I had just become a drunk in their eyes. That's probably been the most painful thing I've ever had to deal with. You'd think that would motivate me to sort myself out, but I just don't have the strength.

I guess they just got sick of the dad that always disappointed them because he was too drunk to see them. For every week I was sober enough to see them, I'd miss three because I was drunk. Eventually my ex-wife said enough, 'until you sober up, I won't let you see the kids.' I knew she was right.

I've reached the point now where I know alcohol is actually killing me. My doctor says I've damaged my liver pretty bad and that if I don't stop soon, I could up like my father.

I do try and stop sometimes and get through a week or two without having a drink, but 'something' always draws me back. I know I should try and get help, but I'm not sure rehab or anything like that is for me.

Maybe I just don't have the will to live anymore. I know I should because of the kids, but I just don't know how I'm going to get myself out of this. It feels like alcohol will probably kill me like it did my dad. Maybe that's also my destiny?
Lost to Alcohol - How It's Destroyed My Family

I am sitting here crying about a loss, shaking because I am so isolated, I was arrested several weeks ago for domestic violence, when I was released from jail the judge told me I couldn't go home, couldn't have any contact with my wife and children, not even by third party means.

Yesterday my wife filed for an Order of Protection, this will be for two years, I can't go home for two years, if she decides to stay in the house. I can't talk to my children, nor most other family members who still communicate with them. The torture of alcoholism has plagued my family for over seven years now. Tearing the emotional attachments apart and laying waste to the love we built on for over 22 years. I have a son, 19, he is so indifferent to this whole mess that he won't talk about it, he's also afraid that if he talks to me I might end up back in jail.

My 16 year old daughter has decided to stay with her mother, because her mother tells her that she is all she has left. The OFP filed includes my daughter, she will not talk to me either. Most of my wife's family is against me and I believe would like to see the worst things happen, i.e. my family break up, the dis-allusion of my marriage, you know, typical stuff.

I love my wife dearly, we often talked about our vows and how "for better or worse" was important in understanding that we had to work at keeping it together. Of course alcohol has broken down that vow and opened the flood gates of animosity and disgust. I regret hitting my wife, it was a loss of control provoked by a drunk who didn't understand what she was doing....

That's right I am not the alcoholic, my wife is. In my attempts to help her I have failed her, and now because of the domestic charges I will loose her and my kids. I wasn't strong enough to do an intervention, which I should have done long ago, but those who profess to love her, (her sisters) wouldn't come to her aid, they still to this day enable her to keep drinking. My children enable her to keep drinking.

I have pleaded with the advocates who work diligently to destroy my family in the name of stopping abuse, to put her into treatment, all they do is help her to get away, they don't do any assessment of her condition other than her physical condition, not her mental state.

Honestly it is my wife who has been abusive, verbally, emotionally and sometimes physically with I and my children. Day after Day she would fall into a drunken rant and target whoever was near. That is why I was arrested, I wasn't strong enough to walk away from her, and in the hurt and pain of her verbal attacks I broke down and lost control. She wasn't hurt in the incident because I called the police, knowing that they would protect her from me. And they did.

Now because of my own actions I have set into motion the destruction of my family and our lives together, and the alcoholic walks away unfettered and able to continue her addiction unabated. It is hard for me to see tomorrow in any way other than utter darkness. I am lost.