



RecoveryWerks!

Family Matters

By Joanne Daxon

Many people believe that when someone enters treatment for chemical dependency, either outpatient or inpatient, the disease will soon be under control, or in remission. This may be because of our instant gratification society or because the expectation is that most diseases don't take very much time to recover from. Regardless of why, as person is going through recovery and has learned to abstain from mind-changing chemicals it is common to think that all will soon be well and life will return to "normal" when treatment ends. This way of thinking keeps the chemically dependent and their family living in a fantasy of wishful thinking. The power and persistence of the disease of addiction is truly underestimated by most people. This is a disease that never goes away or is "cured". It is always lurking nearby. Isay this not to make us paranoid or depressed but to help combat the disease from a realistic point of view. It's similar to a child on antibiotics for a sore throat. The soreness gets better but we need to continue the medication until it is completed. Or better yet, having a predisposition to being overweight. The initial weight loss is complete but now maintaining the ideal weight is at hand. How many times have

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Hate the Disease

By Debi Dickensheets

This concept was foreign to me when I found out my daughter was using and abusing drugs and alcohol. At 14 years old, she had turned into a person I didn't recognize and I didn't like. Her behavior embarrassed me, her manipulation and lies hurt me, and I believed she was doing these things out of pure defiance. It wasn't until I became involved in a family support group for parents of teenagers having the same

issues as me that I came to accept addiction as a disease. And let me just say, I did not accept this idea overnight. It was a process of education classes, reading literature, and being open minded and willing to listen to the experiences of other parents. I learned how the disease of addiction changes the makeup of the brain and how using drugs and alcohol becomes a survival instinct for those in active addiction. According to the National

Institute on Drug Abuse, addiction is a disease and when active it hijacks the brain. "Drugs contain chemicals that tap into the brain's communication system and disrupt the way nerve cells normally send, receive, and process information. There are at least two ways that drugs cause this disruption: (1) by imitating the brain's natural chemical messengers and

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Getting Real

By Jennifer Bagby

I tried to kill myself when I was 16 years old because of drugs, and depression. I went to inpatient rehab shortly after that. I was sober for a little over a year. I didn't go to church or pray, but I claimed to have a relationship with my higher power, who I thought was God, but was really my friends. I watched my friends relapse one by one. I felt alone. I relapsed when I was about 17. I became pregnant and continued to do drugs. I decided to have an abortion. I felt awful that day. I made a promise to God that the next time I got

pregnant I would make up for what I had done by being a great mom. I continued to do drugs. My parents found out I wasn't sober and said if I wanted to do drugs, I could leave. I left. I was homeless, but I always had somewhere to stay. I had a job and friends and complete freedom from my parents which is what I always wanted and I STILL wasn't happy. One night and I asked God "What else can you do to me! You have taken everything." The next day is when I found out I was pregnant again. The only reason I got sober, was because of the promise I had made to Him.

This is who I am without God, left to my own will. I am a liar, a thief and a drug user. I always knew of God, but didn't realize I could have a relationship with Him or that He loved me. I started using drugs because drugs made me feel good. It didn't matter what other people said about me. I felt great about everything. So if I felt so great, why was my life falling apart? Nothing ever seemed to go my way. I was always searching for the easy way out thinking the easy way equaled happiness. I thought that selfishness equaled happiness...even

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Family Matters, *continued*

people said they can lose the weight but then gain it right back?

In both these examples the person looks fine on the outside but all the while the "disease" is continuing on the inside. Very few people believe that the disease is always progressing whether symptoms are readily seen or not. The end result is insanity, jail or premature death. The truth is that inpatient and outpatient treatment programs are the beginning of remission. Most inpatient programs are very short, 1 to 3 months, a sort of emergency room, crisis intervention or stabilization time and then comes the true work of healing and recovery for the chemically dependent and the family. For the next several months to several years all family members would bewise to constantly and actively work their own recovery program. Please don't underestimate the power of addiction.

As a friend says "While I'm in my meetings, my disease is outside doing push-ups." 🙏

Spotlight: River City Advocacy, New Brunfels

By Debi Dickensheets

According to those in recovery and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), recovery from addiction and drug abuse flourishes with community support and personal connection. River City Advocacy, a non-profit organization specializing in mental health support services located at 145 Landa Street in New Braunfels, leads the way in both community support and personal connection. Their mission is to provide peer based mental health recovery support systems needed in our community, and

they walk the walk.

In March 2105, RecoveryWerks! set out to provide addiction recovery support services to teens and their families in Comal County. We were directed to Merideth Erickson, Executive Director of River City Advocacy as someone with a heart for recovery. We asked for two meeting spaces every week for teens struggling with addiction and drug abuse issues and their family members and Ms. Erickson didn't think twice! River City Advocacy graciously opened the doors to this underrepresented population in Guadalupe and Comal counties and began hosting Wednesday evening

meetings for parents and teens. Since the first meeting on April 15, 2015, we regularly welcome new parents who are so thankful to have these recovery support services available in New Braunfels.

River City Advocacy is involved in many aspects of Mental Health recovery, not just recovery from addiction. Multiple support group meetings are held Monday through Thursday throughout the day. To view their entire schedule, please visit

<http://www.rivercityadvocacy.net/schedule>. 🙏

Hate the Disease, *continued*

(2) by overstimulating the "reward circuit" of the brain."¹ I learned that my daughter was ashamed of her behaviors while using and she wasn't trying to hurt me. Instead her focus was on doing whatever it took to continue using. This was a hard concept to accept, but I found that medical and scientific research support what I've learned. "In reality, drug

addiction is a complex disease, and quitting takes more than good intentions or a strong will. In fact, because drugs change the brain in ways that foster compulsive drug abuse, quitting is difficult, even for those who are ready to do so."¹ I'm not a doctor or scientist; I'm a mom with a child who has the disease of addiction. No one wants to believe their child is an addict,

but the truth is addiction is real and 10% of the American population has the disease. RecoveryWerks! is here to help. This journey was not meant to be taken alone. Please call (210)845-8926 if you or a loved one is in need of help. 🙏

Getting Real, *continued*

though I would never admit that I was selfish. I thought that if everyone would leave me alone I would be fine.

My brother invited me to church in 2000. I liked it but I didn't feel like I fit in. Everyone seemed so happy. When the lights went out and they were singing I always felt like crying. I was still living a life of sin even without drugs. I didn't understand why it was so hard for me to make good choices. For about 2 years I went to church and didn't really get it. One day, the pastor said to close

your eyes and to picture the worst thing you have ever done. I thought of when I had the abortion. Then he said, now picture it forgiven. God has forgiven you. You don't have to be ashamed anymore. At that point, I felt alone in church with God. I realized the reason I was uncomfortable in the church was because I was judging myself. I had felt like I didn't deserve God's love. On that day I understood for the first time what it meant to be forgiven and what God's love felt like. It is the day that I started my relationship with God.

Getting sober, becoming a Christian, and having a working relationship with Christ are all wonderful things, it doesn't make my life perfect. Being sober helps me deal with day to day problems with a clear head and enables me to look for God in all things good and bad. Becoming a Christian and having a relationship with God gives me someone to turn to in a time of crisis. Life is not always perfect. The imperfections of life are what build character. God breaks us down to build us up. 🙏