



THE MAINLINE

FEBRUARY 2016

Greetings,

We write you as representatives of Heroin Anonymous World Services (HAWWS). This informational bulletin's purpose is to increase communication between the groups of Heroin Anonymous throughout the world.

A REMINDER FROM THE HAWWS CONVENTION LIAISON

Final reminder! February 12th, 2017, is the deadline for submitting a bid for the 2018 HA World Convention! You can e-mail us with any questions or comments at haconvention@gmail.com.

ONE HEROIN ADDICT'S STORY

My name is Chris and I am a heroin addict. My sobriety date is 2/27/2012 and my homegroup is the Breaking Point group of Heroin Anonymous in Birmingham, Alabama. I was telling another brother in our fellowship just earlier today that if they still made OC 80s I'd probably still be doing them. I am the type of junkie that found heroin as a second choice - a last-ditch effort to maintain a long-time prescription opiate addiction. When the prescription drugs were in short supply, I found solace in heroin, which led to the bottoms of my addiction.

I grew up in an affluent middle-class neighborhood in North Alabama. I experienced no external problems to blame for my addiction. Looking back, I have always thought of myself as shy and quiet. My mother and father both worked for the government and the industry that supports it. My dad was a federal agent and my mother dealt with lie detector machines for a living. So, you can imagine the challenges I faced trying to sneak around and manage a heroin addiction. I learned early on that the easiest lie to tell was the one I didn't have to. I became even more quiet and

isolated for fear of getting caught. Today I live a life where I don't have anything to hide. I have learned that rigorous honesty is the backbone of the new design for living I have been given.

I found my first HA meeting at a halfway house in Bessemer, Alabama in 2012. A friend dragged me along in a time when I didn't want to admit I was a heroin addict. I thought it was shameful and I was full of denial with an attitude of, "If I don't admit to it, it's not real." I was surprised to find a small group of men just like me. They suffered the same way I did. I could relate to them. They seemed to care and

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took the time to get to know me. This became my home group, the first place I felt at home in a very long time. After a time, I learned that it wasn't the problem I wanted to relate to. Instead, it was more so the joy in escape from disaster. It became cool to help. I wanted to be the one who chaired the meeting, or did the topic, or was elected a trusted servant. I found my sponsor at this meeting and they took the time to walk me through the 12 steps which afforded me a spiritual awakening.

While working through the steps I slowly lost the desire to use heroin and, piece by piece, my life became more manageable. Today I am satisfied with the way my life is going and I am generally happy as long as I maintain my status as an active member of Heroin Anonymous. At times, I slack off and get disconnected, but there's always a brother or sister to open the door and welcome me in with open arms. That is what makes Heroin Anonymous so special to me. A life of dope sickness, withdrawal, and misery has been traded in for

one that is full of energy. I found a power greater than myself through the 12 steps that has made this new life possible. I am proud to be a member of a group that is full of excitement. I am of service and carry the message to the still suffering heroin addict. Today, when I see a heroin addict suffering, I can think of him as myself, and take on the responsibility of trying to help him. I believe that to be the basis of this fellowship to which I owe my life.

- Chris C., an H.A. member in Birmingham, AL.

ONE HEROIN ADDICT'S STORY

My name is Cory M. and I am a recovered heroin addict. Today I have a sobriety date. I have been clean from heroin and all mind-altering substances since September 6th 2014. I have a sponsor that knows he is my sponsor, I work the steps, I sponsor other men, and I have a service commitment. Oddly enough, I don't have a home group for the first time in my sobriety. I will be a member of the Strung Out to Dry Group though, once they

have the next business meeting. All of these things are what I have found to keep me sober and happy.

When I was ten years old I moved to Arizona from Illinois with my family. I have a brother who is three years older than me and I idolized him growing up. When I was 12 my parents got divorced due to my father's gambling problem and he left the house. My mom worked a lot which gave my brother and a lot of time to get into

trouble. I wanted badly to be accepted by my brother and his friends. I thought they were really funny, cool, and hung out with really cute girls. Of course I wanted to be a part of that!

They said I could hang out with them as long as I finished a full 40 oz. of "Ole E", first. An hour or two later, when I managed to finish it, I showed up to the party and everyone had already left. Still, the effect from the alcohol was incredible and I

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understood why they loved to party.

I ended up finding my own group of friends that wanted to do the same things as me: experiment with drugs and alcohol. In high school I started smoking weed and if I liked alcohol, well, I loved weed. I wanted to be high all the time. I would hang out with the "burn-out" seniors when I was a freshman because they had the best weed. Eventually, I found myself unable to concentrate at school because of the constant fantasy of the party later on. I ended up at a charter school which was great because everyone there was like me. They just wanted to party, too. Most of my high school life was spent out in the desert burning wooden pallets and drinking kegs of beer. I loved it.

Unfortunately, I thought I would make a good drug dealer. This was mainly for attention from girls and all it got me was attention from the police. I was arrested a couple of times. By the second time, I found myself with significant consequences in the form of an intensive outpatient

program, drug tests, and the dreaded 12 step meetings. I could stop getting high for these things but I found myself completely miserable like the old farts in the Gambler's Anonymous meetings I attended with my dad. Luckily, I had a best friend who also sold drugs and he introduced me to a miracle drug that was "not addictive", gave me a better high than weed, was less expensive than weed, and was out of my system in a few days. It was called Oxycontin. At that time \$10 got me an 80-mg pill and an escape from reality for a couple of days.

This became my reason to live and it seemed that way for all my friends, too. I got off probation and got into an apartment with my buddy and all we did was party and do Oxycontin. Then, the oxy went from ten bucks per 80 mg pill to 80 bucks per 80 mg pill and I found it very hard to afford my habit. Our close-knit group of friends stopped hanging out because that meant the possibility of having to share and I found myself dope sick a lot. This inevitably turned into stealing

from my job and family just to stay well.

One night, a friend introduced me to a new form of Oxycontin called black tar heroin. I always swore I would never do heroin because I had lost my uncle to HIV from sharing needles when he was in prison, but the need for relief was too great and I did it anyway. I felt it would be fiscally irresponsible of me not to do heroin because it was so cheap and the high was so "great". Inevitably, smoking it turned into shooting it. Along the way I crossed a lot of lines I swore I never would. Many of my friends went to jail, a lot overdosed, and some even died.

I decided to quit heroin and I started Suboxone treatment. After being on that for months, and drinking excessively, I got completely off the Suboxone and was back to heroin again. Detox after detox, I would go in with the best intentions and be super motivated to do this program they talked about. I even believed I was going to go back and work at the detox but within a few days I was right back where I started, demoralized and

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confused about why I couldn't stop. This happened time and time again. I lost my job then I tried methadone with a combination of Xanax and psych meds but no matter how long I could stay away from heroin I was only replacing it with another drug. Finally, fearing for my life, my mother offered to put me up in a classy rehab that would detox me and then keep me for thirty days. I thought I was like some kind of honors student in rehab. I had conquered my addiction so I left early, to save my mom money of course, and found myself high again.

I then realized my problem was all the junkies around me so I moved to New Mexico with my brother his family. After about a week of the alcohol and weed maintenance program, I found myself on the streets of Albuquerque trying to score but no one knew me and apparently I looked like a cop so I was unsuccessful. I visited the doctor to tell him of the horrible back pain I was having and he prescribed me Percocet, Morphine and Oxycontin. After a while, he said, "Cory,

you're not getting better. We need to look at surgery." I think most people at this point would have said, "Okay, the gig is up." My mind, however, said, "Surgery? Hell, yeah! I'm going to get enough Oxycontin and Dilaudid to last me forever!"

After a couple of months and now weighing about 150 lbs. soaking wet, I was found out. My brother and sister-in-law found my needles and they had known that I was in a bad way for a while. I never left my room except to get my prescriptions and maybe sneak a muffin out of the pantry. I had become a shell of a person. I got back to Arizona and found myself leaching onto a few last friends I had that didn't know what kind of person I had become. When they gave up, I was without a place to live. My dad decided he didn't want me to be homeless so he helped get an apartment. I was never able to pay rent or make it on my own so that was short-lived.

A friend I had made at the methadone clinic felt bad for me so he let me live with him. I lived with this dude for over

a year and a half and all I could do to thank him was steal his methadone and prescriptions until I was caught by a friend of his. I didn't like that so we ended up fighting and he stabbed me in the shoulder and the neck (I deserved it!). Luckily the knife was a piece of crap because it didn't lock into place and it just sliced the back of my neck open instead of paralyzing me. I ended up in jail wearing a paper suit with staples in my shoulder and neck and in a line only 6 people behind the guy that had just stabbed me.

I committed myself to the mental hospital a couple weeks later. It was the best thing I had ever done! While I was in the hospital I was detoxed from all of the methadone and benzos and they had me going to these little meetings were guys from Heroin Anonymous came in to talk to us. They shared how they not only used like me, but felt like me, too. But, when working the 12 steps, they were able to be sober and happy at the same time.

I kept going to these meetings and I heard this

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man's story that, at points, sounded just like mine. I asked him to sponsor me. When I got out I began to call him and after several relapses I was able to put together a little bit of clean time and learn how to work all 12 steps. I was encouraged to get a home group and a service commitment and, after getting to step 12, to start sponsoring other men. That scared me. I thought I was going to screw someone's life up. He reminded me that I don't have that much power and I was only showing someone the path to freedom that was shown to me. He said, "If you want to stay sober, then I suggest you do it!"

I then moved from treatment to a halfway house and started an HA meeting with several other heroin addicts. Life was getting better and better. The feeling I got from sponsoring others was reminiscent of that high I had always been chasing. I

wanted more, so I dug in. I make lots of mistakes in sobriety. I was kicked out of my halfway house because I broke curfew, but I didn't have to get high over it.

I ended up moving to an apartment and I just continued to do all the same things my sponsor taught me. Life, as described in the book, took on new meaning. I had been restored to sanity. I continued to clean up the past and take steps forward. I met my girlfriend and we moved in together (finally got out of the ghetto). Trust was restored with my family and relationships were mended. In sobriety I have experienced heart ache, sadness, and death. I have seen many people not make it back to the fellowship and I know death is surely waiting for me if I pick up. So, I keep coming back. I do my best to live this program of action because of the joy and happiness I experience on a daily basis. Sometimes I fall short and notice that I am

not as happy. I have found this to be the direct result of resting on my laurels and not making spiritual growth. So, I go back to the basics and life gets better, every time. Someone wiser than me described it like this: I was always trying to get the purist heroin when I was getting loaded, trying to achieve the best high - well the steps work the same way. The closest I can practice these principles (steps) as describe in the big book of AA, the better of a high I get.

If you are new and reading this, welcome. I am so happy you made it here. You are the reason I keep coming back. I hope that you can give this program an honest shot with an open mind. If you do, I am confident you will have a similar, freeing, experience that will allow you to live a happy and productive life free from the chains of heroin addiction.

Yours in service,
- Cory M.

If you would like your meeting featured in our meeting spotlight, or have any other content you would like to submit, please feel free to contact us at the email listed. Thank you!

- Heroin Anonymous World Services Board

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