

# THE CONNECTION

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Vol. three

EXPERIENCE, STRENGTH, AND HOPE WORLDWIDE  
OF AND BY THE MEMBERSHIP OF COCAINE ANONYMOUS

Summer 1988

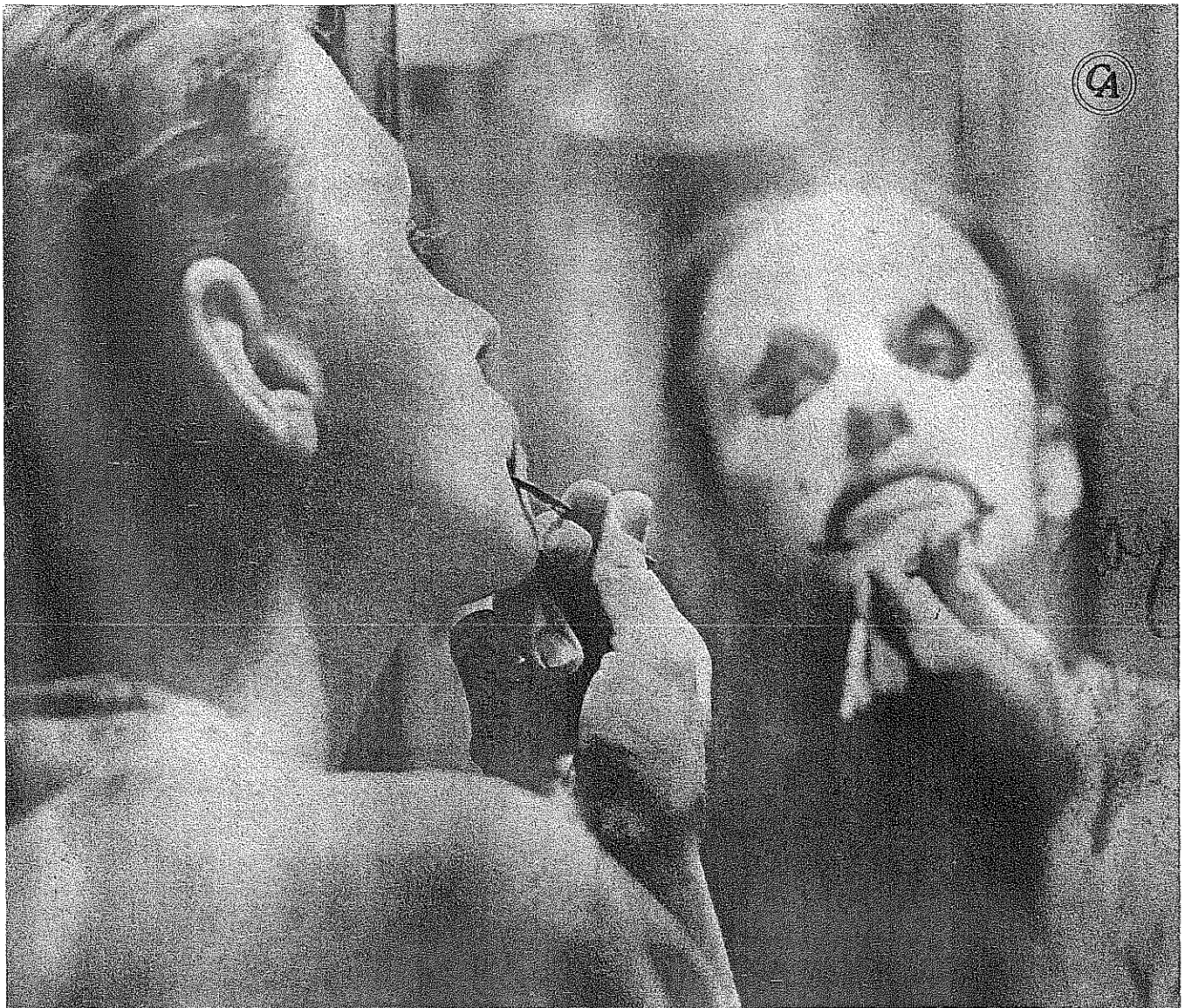


Photo by S.S., Arcadia CA

# CHANGES

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### From the Editor. . . .

My name is Susie and I'm an addict. I'm also acting as Editor of The Connection. What I want to say is this: help! In my opinion The Connection went under the last time not for lack of sales, but for lack of support. No one wanted to contribute time to make this thing happen, not the time to write down their story or poem or letter, and not their time to help type, typeset, paste-up, print and distribute the thing.

Let's not let it go again. Write your story down. Jot us a letter about your recovery. Send us a poem or two. Take a scrap of paper and scribble a quote of something wonderful you once heard at a meeting. Do it!!!

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The theme for the Fall edition of The Connection will be "Surrender", for Winter 1989 "To The Newcomer."

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I hope to hear from YOU, yes YOU!!

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Can't write? Well, we are also accepting black and white photos or black and white pen and ink drawings or cartoons. No recognizable faces, please!

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Still no sale? Then volunteer your time to become a member of the staff. We need people to keep our mailing/subscriber list updated, type up manuscripts, envelopes, distribute copies of The Connection in your area or even just announce The Connection in meetings.

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Thanks for letting me be of service.

## PAIN IN SOBRIETY MADE HER WILLING TO CHANGE

My name is D. and I am a gratefully recovering addict. At a very young age, I recognized what I believed to be my 'difference.' I didn't have steady friends; I spent lots of time alone, and I believed I was smarter than most kids. I didn't know it at the time, but I was lonely.

I was first introduced to liquor as a curative for female cramps when I complained to my parents of pain. I believe a seed was planted to numb the pain of whatever hurt me.

I started on drugs in the late 60's, acid, reefer, pills, cheap wine...I usually abused whatever substance the man in my life abused. I thought it brought us together on a higher plane; I thought I made our relationship 'spiritual.' I thought sex was better. I suppose, in fact, everything was just more intense. The intensity blocked reality.

In the winter of 1985 my job announced that in thirty days it would begin conducting random urine tests. I panicked. I asked my boyfriend, "If I can't get high, what now?" He explained that cocaine leaves the body in only 72 hours. I had never done cocaine but I knew exactly what to do with it. I snorted a few lines, complained about the cost and went to bed.

A few days later he brought home a pipe. From the first hit I was hooked. I tried to be cool and put on a good appearance. I would suggest saving some for later or tomorrow, but I knew he wouldn't stop so it was safe to suggest it. I understood almost immediately that cocaine was addictive, but I did not understand that I was an addict. I smoked for six months. Then one day I realized that cocaine was the most important thing in my life and I stopped. I had stopped and started with other drugs and liquor for years. Stopping coke should be easy. But it wasn't. My boyfriend continued to use, and when I forbade drugs in the house he seldom came home.

For four months I didn't use drugs or alcohol, and then he asked for help. Through A.A. we were referred to a C.A. meeting. I admitted to the fellowship I was an addict. I knew from the comments in that room that I was one among many and that I didn't have to be alone anymore.

My boyfriend and I continued to go to

that one meeting a week. Eventually I went alone. When I realized that the meetings weren't helping him and he was going to continue to use, I stopped going. I continued to stay clean, but I was suffering more spiritually and emotionally than I had in all the years I used and drank. Finally he moved out. I had been clean for a year, and had wanted cocaine every day of that year.

I don't know why but one day when I was feeling like I wanted to die because of the deep hole inside of me, I called a woman in the program, whining about how miserable I was. She asked me if I was praying (no), going to meetings (no), or talking to people on the program (no).

***I stopped going to meetings ... I had been clean for a year, and had wanted cocaine for every day of that year.***

Because I was in such pain, I was now ready to go to any lengths to feel better. I began going to five or six meetings a week. I took phone numbers and eventually I was able to call people; I began praying, and I got a sponsor.

At first it seemed like nothing was changing, but, in fact, much did. Though I'm not aware of when it happened, the compulsion to use left, but the pain did not.

Then one day, I was praying and I realized that though my faith was actually quite minute, I did believe I was praying to God as I understood Him. With this new strength I was able to let go of my boyfriend. Our relationship had been the source of much pain, and for the first time, I was able to say to myself and to God "I don't want this kind of pain anymore."

At my sponsor's suggestion I got involved in service work. I began to care about people other than me. Though I am still self-centered I know I am not the same person I was when I stopped using.

My faith is stronger than ever, and each morning I ask God to keep me sober. I also make a decision that I will be happy. Though problems arise, people hurt my feelings, and I act on my defects, I now reflect on the situation immediately. I don't always admit when I've been wrong, but I always I make a decision not to let anyone or anything change the way I feel about life, and that is: grateful to be alive clean and sober.

# CHANGES

I'm an addict and an alcoholic. I'm also a miracle. A miracle because I didn't wake up with an overpowering obsession to get loaded and because I am changing. That's what it is all about to me-- change, whether it's my reactions, my thoughts, my behavior, or a change in my beliefs. The longer I am clean, the more I see that cocaine was a symptom. I've done heroin, LSD, downers, alcohol and other drugs, but cocaine whipped and humbled me. From using in affluent places to waiting for more on street corners, that was my journey.

Now I'm on a journey of another kind. It is the journey through the Steps of this program. I came from a family that was emotionally incapable of showing affection or sharing feelings. I was always discouraged and felt guilty whenever I had desires or feelings because I was unable to express them. Consequently I was a very angry child. I can share my war stories of how it was, but I know today that what matters is how I was.

Progress in sobriety not perfection. Some days "Don't drink or use no matter what" is all I can manage. I have

been clean and sober for over two years now after many years of resistance to the Fellowship. I know now that when I hear and feel the similarities instead of the differences I have a better chance at this way of life.

Before, I only understood street corners, the hustle, manipulation, and images. But when I came to the Fellowship, it showed me hope, solutions, truth and love. I don't always think on these terms today, but I realize that I don't have to be directed by my past thoughts and actions. The secret past is no longer a secret. My past is no longer my Higher Power.

Someone once told me that Steps One, Two and Three are learning to turn it over. Steps Four through Nine are what we turn over, and Steps Ten through Twelve are how we keep it turned over.

Today I believe in what the Big Book says about the root of my disease being self-centered, selfish fear. Today the answer when I feel fear or when I have a self-created dilemma is either to treat it chemically or treat it spiritually. I thank

Cocaine Anonymous for being a channel of hope for me today. There is a way to live with feelings and thoughts without using drugs or alcohol.

One other thing that helps when I'm not feeling centered or when I experience those feelings of low self-esteem, self pity and fear is knowing that the best thing I can do is show up, pay attention, and tell the truth.

The reality of it is that once I started drinking or using, I was powerless-- I could not stop. I spent years going in and out of this program being directed by my past and reacting to my old thoughts. Today the principles help to guide me and clear away the past. I have a better understanding of fellowship, i.e. meetings, people and recovery, the Steps and helping others. I can take nothing and be the same, or take nothing and change. I am grateful for that choice. If you believe the same, you'll stay the same; if you believe differently, you'll change.

E.G.  
San Mateo,  
CA

## "Your Baby's a Junkie"

Marijuana...Quaaludes...Speed...P.C.P.  
....Heroin...Cocaine...

How deceiving these drugs can be! This is the story of a twelve year old kid who thought drugs were the answer, only to find himself, years later, in a federal prison serving a twenty year sentence without the possibility of parole for trying to be "one of the boys."

I'm B. As a child I grew up in a rough neighborhood of South Philadelphia known to many as the "Italian Market."

It seems that since I was a kid something was always missing in my life, something I never understood until now. I tried to fill this void with street gangs, drugs, girls, fancy clothes, big cars, and money. I never cared much for school, thinking it was "jive." I smoked my first joint at twelve years old, thinking it would make me part of something and chasing a dream that turned out to be a nightmare. Even though I swore I would never use anything heavier than marijuana, it was no more than two months later I was taking "downers" for the same reasons. As the void in my life got bigger, that need to be accepted also got stronger and so did the drugs I

was taking.

Soon after this some of my friends and I robbed a candy store for forty dollars and change to buy two ounces of marijuana, which we used to start dealing nickel bags. We ran a nickel and dime business from the street corner. There were times when we had cars backed up for half a block with people trying to "cop" from us, especially on Friday nights.

I got not only money from dealing, also acceptance, prestige, girls, and a feeling of importance. It surely did feel good to be thought of as the "main man" in the neighborhood among my peers, especially at the age of thirteen.

The problem, though, was that I was trying to fill this void, which just seemed to keep getting bigger and bigger. Soon the girls and the dealing just couldn't fill it. There was no peace or satisfaction in anything for me.

When you're struggling to keep up a reputation, you have to keep up with the times. At this time, the older fellows were shooting speed. At first I said, "I'll never put a needle in my arm!" But,

Continued on page 4

### *A Summer Night Sober* (The Recovery)

Summertime is coming  
I hear the crickets  
My skin is turning  
From pale to bright...  
I love to swim in the night  
With warm air about me.  
I look up at the sky with wonder  
There are wind chimes tinkling  
On my porch  
And my cat is on her nightly walk.  
I will climb into bed now,  
After my prayers  
Smell the freshness of my pillows  
And the coolness of the sheets  
And put my head down  
And get some sleep.

(In appreciation to my Higher Power,  
C.A./A.A. etc.)

C.M.  
San Gabriel  
Valley, CA

Continued from page 3

overcome with peer pressure and wanting to live up to my reputation, I found myself (at thirteen) taking my first shot of speed. Within seconds, as the drug went through my veins, I remember saying, "I want more."

I was aware of the old rumor that says "one hit and you're hooked." Maybe it's not true that you're physically addicted, but I tell you from the bottom of my heart that from my first I was hooked!

My friends and I swore we would only do it on weekends. That was fine, for a while, until summer.

Even though I frequently heard a little voice that I didn't understand within myself telling me that what I was doing was wrong, the feelings from the drugs were too strong to resist. I had no adults in whom I could confide or to seek counsel from or guidance. Not that my parents wouldn't have listened; I was just afraid they wouldn't understand, and I didn't want to let them down.

About half way through my junior year at high school I was introduced to the big "H," heroin. I thought for sure that it was the answer to all my problems, and sure that it was ...temporary. By summer I found myself going through \$50 to \$100 a day. Eventually I was so sick that my father called the doctor. I'll never forget the look on my father's face when the doctor told him, "Your baby's a junkie!" Even though my father was disappointed and hurt so badly that I can't find the right words to describe it, he never gave up on me. We tried drug program after drug program. Nothing we did seemed to be the answer to my problems. I put my family through pure torture.

So, to make a very long story relatively short, I began a life of dealing cocaine and living in the "fast lane." In plain words, for a while, I had everything that could be bought with money. Then one day I found myself in solitary confinement in the county jail waiting to be transferred to federal prison. I had just received a twenty year sentence without possibility of parole. For me what was missing from my life and from my recovery was my Higher Power. I found that Higher Power in that jail cell, when I confessed my life was a mess and I needed a savior.

I suppose that if there is any advice I would give it's that drugs are not the answer to the void. You can take it from me, a kid that learned too late, but at least I learned.

B.M.

## JUST FOR TODAY

1. I am alive
2. I am clean and sober
3. I have a Higher Power that I truly have faith in, who loves me, and who forgives
4. I can feel
5. I have real friends who love me for who I am
6. I don't have to let what others do affect me in a negative way
7. I can be myself, but I don't have to be by myself
8. I need people
9. I am needed by people
10. I love myself
11. I have the capacity to love others
12. Others love me
13. I am not a bad person
14. It's okay if everybody doesn't like me
15. I can take care of myself
16. I don't have to take care of others
17. If I can, I am willing to help others
18. I don't have to be my worst enemy
19. I do not have to control, only God has control
20. I don't have to judge others
21. God will not give me anything I cannot handle
22. God knows better than I do
23. I have a path that I am to follow that will lead to happiness
24. I always have a place to go where I am accepted for who I am
25. God will give me serenity, courage and wisdom if I ask for them
26. I do not need to be afraid of others
27. I do not need to be angry or harbor resentments
28. My Higher Power has unconditional love, understanding and forgiveness for me
29. With His help, I can and will recover from my disease, and help others to recover too

H.S.  
San Marino, CA



# CA in Paradise

Tonight as I was having dinner with my CA fellowship after the meeting, more than ever, I was thinking about how the fellowship here in Hawaii got started. I was "twelve-stepping" L.; it was her second meeting and she agreed to go to coffee with us. We talked about smoking the ceiling stucco (thinking it was a rock of coke), and she talked about her fears: fear of becoming too square, fear of not making it, the fear that maybe she would...on an on. It sounded just like me, two and a half years ago at the coffee shop, following the Friday night meeting in Pasadena.

I am growing and moving on. I have learned to trust myself in sobriety, and 'self' said to me about a month ago that it is time to turn over my service commitments in Hawaii CA to others in the fellowship. We have a small fellowship here in Paradise; it's not the quantity that counts, though, it's the quality. And Hawaii CA is pure joy. It's not like we don't ever get into personalities; oh, do we ever. But we love each other. Well, let me not get too sugary. I feel I am loved in CA, most of the time, and usually when I don't feel loved it's because my oldest and most durable tape is playing. The one which says I am no good and don't deserve to be loved.

How did it start? One of the many gifts my Higher Power offered my early in sobriety was the chance to move from L.A. to Hawaii. So like a good addict/alcoholic, I ignored what the program said about no drastic changes in the first year. You see I was practicing Step Three in almost all my affairs. So, says I, if my Higher Power is choosing to give me what I wanted, at six months sobriety, rather than at one year, who am I to say no? (by the way don't use this line on your sponsor) I quit my job in L.A., rented my place out, and moved to Paradise.

***It was ... real easy to hide in the back of AA meetings, not having to admit to being a hope to die cocaine addict.***

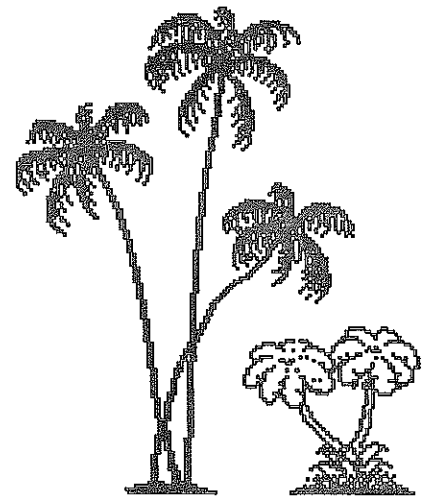
The first five months here I only went to AA meetings. I already knew that there was no hope for an addict of my

kind without a fellowship. I am forever grateful to AA for keeping me sober, but in all honesty, something was missing for me. I missed the CA meetings, and began seeing the warning signs: I was forgetting how miserable I was the last time I had freebased. It was becoming real easy to hide in the back of AA meetings, not ever having to admit to being a miserable, hopeless, hope to die cocaine addict. The writing was on the wall, and I could see where I was heading. I was getting scared.

My Higher Power intervened by bringing another person to Hawaii who had used CA in their early sobriety in San Francisco. We met in an AA meeting, and a couple of months later, we met for the first CA meeting in Honolulu. We had no money for a room, so we chose to use God's room. There is a popular spot for meetings on Waikiki Beach since there are twelve coconut trees in a circle at the site. There were twelve people at that first meeting (12 'n' 12)!! It turned out to be an excellent meeting. Today none of the other eleven people from that meeting are involved in CA Hawaii, but CA has survived.

Since then it has been a hell of a journey. A few months later we were able to connect a second phone at my apartment as a CA hotline. Another member donated a phone with an answering machine. I had never actually worked the phones in L.A., and I remember that for the first month, I used to cry after almost every phone call. I could not believe the horrifying experiences of practicing addicts, and most of them refused to come to meetings, no matter how miserable they were. I am grateful for that first hand experience of hearing the denial of our disease. The phone has been moved twice since then. Each time God has provided another fellow addict with solid sobriety to take over the responsibility.

About two months ago, we had our first hospital panel, and next week three of us will be speaking in front of 70 high school students. We have six meetings now, and the core of the fellowship is about fifteen people. I know that we have carried the message through the phone to hundreds of others. We have had visitors from other Hawaiian Islands, California, New York and



Canada.

***We have a small fellowship here in Paradise; it's not the quantity that counts, though, it's the quality. And Hawaii CA is pure joy.***

I will never be able to give to CA what it has given to me. I am a different person today. That scared woman that walked into the Thursday night meeting in Pasadena is now courageous most of the time. That hopeless, hope-to-die addict is full of hope. Through this program I have freedom from cocaine and alcohol (cigarettes too!), freedom from obsession and abusive relationships, freedom from financial insecurity, freedom from closed-mindedness, and the list goes on, and I know there is more to come. All I wanted was to stop using cocaine.

I have also been introduced to a Higher Power who forgives me, loves me and protects me. Mine is a loving God who does not want me to live in fear. So most of the time I can turn fear into faith pretty quickly. When I remember where I came from, nothing in my life scares me. Being of service and carrying the message has done wonders for me. It taught me the little I know about humility, and it has forced me to practice humility in "all my affairs." But as my sponsor puts it I still have 99 years to go. I hope you can put up with me that long, because I'm here for the long haul. I love you all, and thank you for letting me share.

N.N.  
Honolulu, HI

# POETRY

Now that Mickey Mouse is set aside.  
My little girl 'la la' an adult lie.  
I have to fight the urge to say goodbye,  
To run from twenty-seven, run and hide.  
Yes, of course, this is obscure and obtuse,  
Like me, locked behind shadowy dreams.  
The inside never what the outside seems.  
If I stay locked inside, then what's the use?

In the light of some true greatness we all pale.  
We're never as good as what we'd be  
While we're living inside our fantasy.  
If now I try, for real, I just might fail.  
But try I must, for I've thrown away my toys,  
Try to face the real world of pain and joys.

S.S  
Arcadia, CA

## THEN

Will you come and guide me  
To a place I've never been?  
And when I feel I'm slipping  
Will you pick me up again?

When the moonless sky is eerie  
And my feelings mounting high  
Will you come and hold me tightly  
Till the tears begin to dry?

Just as you have done these things  
For me, I'll do for you.  
Then and only then  
Can we say our love is true.

M.T.  
Ontario, CA

From the murky waters of my mind,  
It's recovery time.  
For there are thoughts that still do shine.  
The using is over.  
It's time to renew  
The good things in life,  
That life has to offer to you!  
Like drudging a lagoon,  
Thoughts have been hidden in gloom  
For quite some time.  
Only to find time,  
To clean and shine you own mind!

J.C.  
Milwaukee, WI

## MY FIRST YEAR

Inside I'm a baby  
Just learning to grow.  
I now let my feelings  
'Roll with the flow.'

At times I'll feel hurt,  
Scaredness or sad,  
But it's okay today,  
For feelings are not good or bad!

Without my coke,  
Or booze or pills,  
I'm now climbing up,  
Instead of down hills.

Today I am happy,  
Sober and free,  
And I also found out  
It's okay to be me.

D.J.  
Milwaukee, WI

## THERE IS A SOLUTION

Today we live, one day at a time in the solution.  
Yesterday's problems must no longer haunt us.  
The problems that our addictions brought us,  
Are dealt with in reality,  
Tackled and solved with the solution of recovery.

Through turning it over (to God)  
Being willing, honest, and humble--  
We will sustain a victorious recovery.

We here at the Solution strive  
For self-growth and self-discovery.  
With the help of each other, we can  
Obtain and maintain a solid program of recovery.

Building a new foundation,  
We become able to function intently  
and effectively in our sobriety  
and in our society.

We will make  
Yesterday a memory  
Tomorrow a dream  
And today a reality.

S.T.  
Compton, CA

# QUOTES

"You don't have to change much...just your whole life."

\*\*\*\*\*

"I didn't want to change. Not my looks, not my friends, not the places I wanted to go. And I kept slipping. Now, it's all about change."

\*\*\*\*\*

"Change isn't painful. It's resistance to change that hurts."

\*\*\*\*\*

"For me it was change or die"

\*\*\*\*\*

"I like the changes. I like who I'm becoming, and that's change...."

\*\*\*\*\*

"I had to change my heroes... they were all dead."

Please send your stories, letters, poems, and quotes to:

The Connection  
P.O. Box 1367  
Culver City, CA 90232

## Player and the Game

Once upon a time, a drug called Cain.  
Came up to me and called me by my name.

Said, Hello Player, how was your day?  
I got this game I'd like to play.

This game is kind of tricky,  
This game is kind of fun.

This is very deadly,  
This game will make you run.

So, I said to the drug,  
The Player is here.

I'll play 'til I win.  
I'll play without fear.

The game got started,  
The Player on top,  
But it didn't take long,  
Before he let his guard drop.

The Cain played crucial,  
Then Cain played mean.  
This drug played undercover,  
like a killing machine.

Cain said, rock me up Player  
Drop me in your pipe.

Let's play all night.  
Cain up, Player down.  
Flat on his back.

Now, I've got you where I want you  
And there's no bouncing back.

In walked the Devil.  
Said, Cain, give him a chance.  
I want to see this Player juggle,  
I want to see the sucker dance.

So, Cain backed off,  
Gave up his grip,  
And the Player gasped - yeah,  
This is the ultimate slip.  
The Player stood up.

Took a deep breath and a cough,  
"Say goodbye little parasite,  
I'm turning you off.  
Say goodbye Devil,  
you're as good as through,  
I'm turning you over  
I'll let God deal with you."

Cain said, just remember  
Play my game again now.  
And we'll play until you're gone,  
Now let me explain how.  
I'll play your worst enemy,  
I'll play your best friend,  
Beyond your wildest dreams,  
I'll play you till the End.  
I'll play you in the morning,  
I'll play you late at night.  
I'll play you with an arsenal  
Give you one hell of a fight.

I'll take all your possessions,  
I'll take all that you've earned.  
I'll play you to the End,  
I'll play you 'til you burn.

I'll play from in between  
the husbands and the wives,  
I'll play you out of our families,  
I'll cut you like a knife,  
I'll play you out of churches  
I'll play you out of towns,  
I'll hit you hard and heavy.  
Till you're no longer around.  
If you play with me again  
I'll play you on your turf,  
I'll play you till you're no longer  
On your God's Earth.

C. M.  
Birmingham, AL

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