



ISSUE 4
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The DDAer

A Newsletter for DDAers and Friends of DDA

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DDAers Write!

From Jennifer Springsteen, Editor

We asked, and the DDA community has responded with great poetry, essays and stories.

In this issue, we will feature many of these wonderful writings. We hope to continue to publish poetry and stories in the DDA Star, so keep them coming. We apologize that we aren't able to publish every piece we receive.

Aside from publication in the newsletter, we are collecting your stories for our own DDA Big Book.

If you have sent us a story or poem and haven't signed a consent form, please call us, and we'll get one to you so we can publish your work.

Guidelines for writing:

- Try to keep your writing within or under **500** words.
- When writing, consider: what was the path you were once on, and what path do you now see for your future?
- Accompany your story with a completed and signed consent form, available on our website or call the central office to request that one be mailed to you.
- Please be aware we edit stories
- Send your story and consent form to:
DDA of Oregon, Inc. PO Box 2883
Portland, OR 97208
or email to: jennfers@ddaoforegon.com

A Testament

By Paul Y.

I spent eight years of my early life walking increasingly closer and closer to a hole that, unbeknownst to me, I would eventually and literally dive into over and over and over during the next twenty-one years of my life. It culminated in the loss of my two children, two failed marriages, the inability to maintain any type of gainful employment with the eventual loss of the ability to work in my chosen field, repeated stints in the county jail, and the eventual forty-month sentence to the Oregon state prison system.

And my use did not stop with my being incarcerated. If anything, I came into the system with the full intention of staying loaded the whole time, until one afternoon, while sitting in my cell on the second tier of "D" block in the maximum security section of the Oregon State Penitentiary, I had a vision of overdosing on the heroin my cell mate (who was serving a double life sentence) was going to get me from one of his prison gang connections.

After that vision of death in that cold, dank cell, I haven't used any alcohol or illegal drugs...I took another two full years of staying clean before what I can only describe as a "spiritual awakening" took place over the course of a two and a half day period. The feelings, emotions, and realizations I experienced over this time repeatedly brought me to tears of both joy and sorrow. It was truly a changing point in my life, not just for sobriety's sake, but more importantly, for clearly seeing my place in and with God and humanity.

Approximately two and a half weeks after that, while reliving old "war stories" with some friends, I realized that my desire to drink had been removed.

And now, a couple of months later, I have given up mood-altering prescription drugs and have cut back on my use of caffeine and sugar as well. This is not to maintain a sober lifestyle, but rather a spiritual one.

I've come to realize that my life is and will be a spiritual journey and I cannot focus on spirituality if I am not sober. For me, the two go hand in hand.

From Anonymous

I was curious about the DDA program and I heard it was for mental illness and substance abuse. Well, I checked out a few meetings inside the hospital and liked it. It's very open and has a good atmosphere about the place. Now I'm hooked to something's that good for me. It may be simple but it's the hardest thing I've ever done. With the program and the people, who are super, I have found myself after drifting along and fighting all I met in my journey through this life.

We only dance here for a short while on this earth and so you better make it good.

Respect all & learn much, thanks.

What's Happening

Are you on the DDA Fellowship Gathering Invite List? Each month, DDA hosts a fellowship gathering for DDAers and friends of DDA. The gatherings are either in Clackamas, Oregon, at A Daily Reprieve Recovery Center or in Salem.

If you would like to be added to the invitation list, please send an email to: jennifers@ddaoforegon.com or phone : 503-222-6484.

Sobriety Certificates are available on the DDA website or by contacting the central office, as well as lots of other great DDA materials! Check it out!

Did you know our Founder, Corbett, Chairs the DDA Central Meetings on Wednesdays? Join him from noon to 1:00 pm at 521 SW 11th in downtown Portland.

NEW MEETINGS:

Malheur County
Unio Recovery Center
PO Box 606/ 686 NW 9th St.
Ontario, OR 97914
Wednesdays & Saturdays—8:00-9:00pm
(closed)

Multnomah County
Oregon State Hospital
1121 NE 2nd Avenue
Portland, OR 97232
Mondays—1:00-2:00pm
(closed)

Multnomah County
Clifford Building
519 SE Morrison Street
Portland, OR 97205
Mondays 7:00-8:00 pm
(open)

Clackamas County
Villebois at Charleston
11609 SW Toulouse St
Willsonville, OR 97070
Fridays —1:00-2:00pm
(open)



Corbett's Corner

Welcome to the late fall edition of the DDAer!

As Founder/Executive Director of DDA of Oregon I have been, and continue to be honored and blessed with the personal stories and insights of DDAers throughout Oregon and beyond. We are devoting this issue of the DDAer to some of these stories and insights that have been sent to us over the past year or so. We have heard it said in the rooms of recovery that "we can only keep what we give freely to others." This is the embodiment of "Service" and we know that there can be no recovery without Service.

As you read this edition of the DDAer, I pray that you too will be blessed, as I have, with the tremendous recovery represented in the words of DDAers throughout Oregon!

I would also like to extend a heartfelt "Welcome" to DDA's new Administrative Services Manager, Jennifer Springsteen! Please take a moment to welcome Jennifer to the DDA Family!

Love, Peace, and Blessings,
Corbett

Ode to DDAers

By Mac A.

Recovery is a carousel of hope
Turning in an endless spin
It's life without alcohol or dope
And its where our mental health will win.

Recovery recaptures the heart
With a tight embrace
It rebuilds our wellness from the start
And puts smiles back on the face.

Recovery can be damaged, we know
But never destroyed
For it is the extra five steps that show
That a clean and sober life can be enjoyed.

Recovery is abstinence and wealth
Without mind-altering addictions,
But also managing our mental health
Without hopeless derelictions.

Recovery is where we're free
And have control of our lives
Step into it and you'll see
That together we DDAers will survive!

Pictures from the October DDA BBQ
in Medford



Rex's Story

I had the good life. My parents, siblings, aunts, uncles, cousins, and friends all loved me. I went to school and got good grades. When people described me they would say I was intelligent, sensitive and had a great sense of humor. My family and I have been just as close, if not more, than any other family I have come into contact with on this lovely planet. We lived the good and the bad together. So why, when I was 18 years old, and the world seemed to be in my hands, did I go into the kitchen, get a knife and stab my father repeatedly again and again in the abdomen? Why would a good kid do something like this? The answer is that my brain was broken. I no longer could tell the difference between what was real and what was false. I actually believed my father was a computer being and the only way he could enter into heaven was to be sacrificed.

Weird? Amazing? Fascinating? Scary? Take your pick and I would agree with you. So, why did my mind lie to me? Why did I believe the lie? Why did I think my father needed to be killed? This man who loved and cared for me my entire life I now attempted to kill. Why? These are the questions some people find themselves waking up to every-day. I now have some answers thanks to the support and loving care of my family, some people and doctors at the Oregon State Hospital, and support groups such as Dual Diagnosis Anonymous. Here they are:

I am mentally ill. This means that my brain does not always work. Without medicine, I would have extremely odd thoughts and beliefs; I would even see things that are not actually there. The reasons for this are many, and I am not going to attempt to explain all the science behind it, because truthfully, I don't actually know it all. As a matter of fact the understanding of mental illness within the medical field is still within its infancy. The point I want to stress is that mental illness comes in all forms and pays no attention to social status or cultural background. We are all in this boat together. If you are human, you have the chance of being ill.

Next thing I learned is that I have a substance abuse problem. This means that when I feel scared or paranoid or uncomfortable (which is basically all the time if my mental illness is left untreated), then I try and ease my discomfort with substances such as alcohol or pot. What is even more insane is that these drugs actually exacerbate the symptoms of my illness. I now find some of my comfort and loving support from listening to other people who have experienced the same things as me; people who have experienced the complexity of not being able to trust your own brain; people who have had the misfortune of being addicted and lost. I find who I am, who I have been, and who I can be in dual diagnosis. That is the joy and comfort of what being a DDAer can, and will, bring.

My father (thank God) is alive and well. Our relationship has never been better. I now am succeeding at life by taking the necessary steps to live healthy in my predicament. I take my medicine as prescribed and stay abstinent from non-prescribed drugs and alcohol. I do this by staying close to the DDA program and trying to keep myself surrounded by people who care for me. My life will forever be altered from my life experiences, the good and the bad. I only hope that the people who may have to endure the same circumstances I have will stumble and land on the program of DDA. ❄️

Pamela P.'s Story

I wasn't shown much love or affection after the age of five: mom said years later to me that kids got icky after that age.

My story of using started when I was about six. It wasn't drugs or alcohol, it was a simple cigarette.

We went to mom and dad's friends house where they partied with their alcoholic (they were alcoholic, too). They all smoked, and I was always very curious about cigarettes. My sister and the other kids were playing together, and it wasn't unusual for me to end up by myself. I opened the drawer that held the smokes, took out a pack, opened it, and took one cigarette out. I took off to the pasture and found a nice hiding spot. I was already getting a seductive feeling of naughtiness. As I put the cigarette to my mouth, the feeling got stronger, and as I struck the match to light the cigarette, the feeling got even stronger. I took a drag and even inhaled! I loved the feeling that came over me. I found my new world, the world of the forbidden.

My first experience with alcohol and marijuana was when I was twelve. I was at friends house and her mom supplied them for us. When it was my turn to have some wine, I took the bottle to my lips and chugged. I drank alcoholically from the beginning. The pot didn't come out until I was very drunk. I took a couple of hits, and there were things I did that I was embarrassed and ashamed of. I discovered guilt, shame, remorse, and horror. I swore off drugs and alcohol.

We ended up moving to Waldport, Oregon. Shortly after, my mom made me sell my only love, my horse Skadjet. My horse was my everything, my heart remained broken years after.

I was known as the goody-two-shoes where I was a freshman at our new school: Waldport High. It was late my sophomore year before I attempted my next exploration of alcohol. I chugged it like I did the first time. It was a tumbler of half vodka and half cream de coca. Needless to say I was violently sick that night and the also following day.

I swore it off again until I was into my junior year. My friends and I would get two bottles of soda pop wine

called strawberry hills by Boones Farm. We chugged the first one at my suggestion and then drank the other bottle of wine.

I loved how my tummy got warm and my body felt warm and fuzzy and my nose went numb. Everything was pleasurable when I was intoxicated. I looked forward to every weekend when we would indulge in this tradition. I discovered pot shortly after. My only solace after the trauma of breaking up with my boyfriend during senior year was when I drank, smoked pot, or had sex with someone.

My first experience with crank was when I was eighteen. It was love at first high: I found my new drug of choice. I loved how it got me to talk more, and how confident I felt. Not to mention the energy it would produce. It left my depression in the dust. The next day coming down, I was so miserable it was unbearable. I found myself looking for more crank to pick me back up. It continued like that for about a year.

Cocaine was introduced to me by my boyfriend. The high was so incredible: very similar to crank, but cleaner. Unfortunately, it didn't last as long. I found myself preferring crank because it was cheaper and lasted longer.

Sex, drugs and rock n' roll! That was the world in which I found my only pleasure. Life without these intoxicants and physical indulgences would render me with that old familiar pain of severe depression that I experienced since I was six years old.

I knew I was making choices that weren't conducive to the world where people weren't over-indulgent and seemed to just be different from me. But I didn't care because I didn't know how to live in that world. It was dull and lifeless, and I felt unworthy to be in it. I thought those people were better than me at the time.

I married my karate sensei at twenty-one with a baby on the way. While pregnant, I was able to abstain from any drug or alcohol and even quit smoking. However, I picked up drinking almost where I left off every evening after I had her. By this time I gave up hard drugs because my husband and his friends, my new ones, weren't into them.

So I followed suit and abstained.

My twins were born fifteen months after my first baby, and all hell broke loose. It was too much for me. I managed although I very much looked forward to the evening so I could drink. One day I decided: why wait? I started pouring drinks around two in the afternoon. It worked beautifully to temporarily rid me of the stress that built up after the twins were born. The only problem was my husband didn't think so. I didn't care what he thought. He would drink with me in the evenings, and then the abuse started. After three years of abuse, I took the kids and left him.

He talked me into coming back and I agreed to see a therapist. He told us to remove alcohol from our lives in order to get past this. This started my four years of sobriety. I didn't attend any meetings, I was just living life as well as I possibly could, and for the first time, I flourished.

When diagnosed with fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue, I caved in and started to drink again to offset the depression and physical and emotional pain I suffered from.

This started my obsession with God. I would write to him throughout the day and talk about him non stop. My one son who was six then, finally said to quit talking about God so much. I had a spiritual experience so extreme it landed me in the funny farm. To this day I believe it to be real and to this day the mental health professionals say I'm delusional.

My husband and I got divorced, and I moved into a house I purchased from the divorce settlement. I soon started seeing another man. He suggested that meth might help my fatigue. I became obsessed with finding answers to my obsessive questions: why was Satan here? Why did God create him? Was he purely evil? Could he love or only hate? I couldn't find any books to help my curiosity so my obsession grew. My world got so obsessed with God, Satan and Jesus that it was all I talked about, and when I got high it would amplify.

(continued next page...)

Pamela's Story

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My behavior was getting more and more unusual. I ended up in the funny farm a few times more only to get out after a month at the most, throw away the meds and begin consuming drugs and alcohol because with them, that world got so real and so close to me. I thought I was on to something.

I lost my home due to being in a car wreck and almost losing my left ankle and foot. That's another story in itself. After the insurance money ran out and the alimony payments stopped, I was officially homeless. The hospital refused to take me because I would never stay on their meds and continually use, I would end up in the drunk tank waiting to get out so I could use again.

I spent many days in hotel rooms. Only when I partied I was different than others. I would sit for hours writing trying to come up with some formula that would take some of the mysteries out of life. It was all about God, Satan and Jesus. I was arrested when I was homeless with a burglary one charge.

Today I do know I have a severe mood disorder called Bi-polar. I was self medicating this with street drugs and alcohol as most of us do. I'm still under the PSRB (parole for those who plead guilty but reason of insanity). I've been out of the state hospital for almost three years and I have been clean and sober for five years. I have up to fifteen more years to complete but could be released on a full discharge early.

✘:

When All is Gone...Hope Remains By Justin H.

To be loved is to be adored and cherished. To feel love is to feel an affection so intense your heart is flooded with a passionate enthusiasm! But like the mighty empires throughout history, love can be conquered, being replaced with hatred and discontent.

To have strength is to possess power. To have power is to have the ability to resist the everyday attacks of stress and wear. However, every person that possesses strength also possesses some kind of weakness. Once that weakness is exposed, the strength is slowly stripped away from the poisonous forces that smother us like hot, unbearable humility. Leaving us a shell of the person we once were.

To be blessed with will power is to be able to stand on your own two feet. You are a warrior that stands alone. With strength of mind you are able to carry your desires and wishes. But how long can one last on his or her own before they are overmatched?

To put your faith in someone or something is to blindly believe in truth, value and loyalty. Can you do this day in and day out for the rest of your life? The realistic and honest answer for most of us is no. Faith is tested on a daily basis, overwhelming us to the point where we begin to question and falter. Our faith is often placed with disbelief and doubt.

Then there is hope, brothers and sisters! When all else is tested, lost, and taken away; there is hope. Our motto is: "To live without hope is to cease to live." Hope will always remain! Don't ever give up! There is always hope! Hope for all of us! And may that hope carry us through for the rest of our days! Never forget: To live without hope is to cease to live."

From Anonymous

By the grace of God, I was introduced to DDA and now at thirty-nine years of age, I feel that the burden to use or self-medicate is gone. Today I try to 'live life on life's terms.' I also have accepted my dual diagnosis. Thank you to God for leading me to freedom and to DDA where I feel I do fit in and can relate to those in the fellowship. The relationship with all three of my children is so blessedly being restored. Thank you God, and DDA, for giving me my life back.



October BBQ in Medford, OR

DDA of Oregon, Inc.
PO Box 2883
Portland, OR 97208

The DDA Star Fall 2010 Issue 4

Dual Diagnosis Anonymous of Oregon, Inc.

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Meetings Monday- Friday,
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Questions, concerns or suggestions regarding this
newsletter? Please contact the editor, Jennifer S. at
(503) 222-6484 or jennifers@ddaoforegon.com

What is DDA?

Dual Diagnosis Anonymous (DDA) is a peer support program based on a version of the

12 Steps of

Alcoholics Anonymous with an additional 5
Steps that focus on Dual Diagnosis (mental illness and substance abuse).

DDA's unique 12 Steps Plus 5

Program offers hope

for achieving the promise of recovery.