



June 2019 Newsletter

SPIRIT, MIND, BODY

Disengaging from the twisted narrative of a loved one struggling with addiction can seem insurmountable. Instinctively, when someone close to us falls, fails, or finds themselves in the grips of mental/emotional illness or disease, our first reaction is often to dive in headfirst and become a human life preserver. Unfortunately, without proper education and instruction, our attempts at rescuing are in vain, ultimately transforming into detrimental behaviors that enable others and ourselves to stay sick. In PAL, CODA, and 12-step groups we discuss the pitfall of codependency often. I've yet to meet an addict or family member of an addict who hasn't struggled in some way with varying degrees of codependent behavior. Sometimes it would seem that humanity in general inherently has codependent behaviors ingrained in our DNA. Practical application of various differing therapies, strategies, and self-care seem to be the most effective in combating these ineffectual attempts to pull someone out of the darkness on our own power.

The first step in working toward a solution is recognizing the problem, owning it, and surrendering to the fact that we may not know what's best for someone else, or even ourselves. I've found in my personal life that most people, including myself, must learn things the hard way. That usually means failing repeatedly until we find ourselves beaten into a position of powerlessness where we can reach out and ask for help. The journey of recovery begins with the simple step of asking someone else, who has been on the path before you, to guide you along the way. While you might often feel weak and defenseless alone, together we are made strong by our shared admissions of defeat and willingness to move forward. That's where support groups come in. By creating a safe space to share your feelings and express your frustrations, we foster a sense of community and shared struggle where others can provide experience, strength and hope. Abandon yourself to these people! Learn to let others love you when you can't seem to love yourself. When your attempts to control or rescue others frustrates you enough, you can find yourself in a position to learn something new and grow.

Self-care is vital on the path to actualization and being a true, helpful contributing influence on someone else's life. In AA we like to say, "You cannot transmit something you haven't got." In other words, if your mental and emotional health is in shambles, either due to life circumstances or frustration with loved ones, what could possibly make you think you have something to offer them in the way of healthy assistance! Recovery is a multi-faceted process. You need a foundation in spirituality. Whether that's through church, support groups, or other spiritual practices, this piece is the building block upon which we branch out into our new, healthy lives. Prayer and meditation, practiced regularly, an unburdening of your woes to your

Higher Power, and a willingness to truly turn your will and your life over will change everything. Once the spirit is addressed, we move to the mind, and of course the body. Maintaining physical fitness at even a mild or casual level will transform the mind and can provide a new perspective. Start small if you need to: simply walking your neighborhood in the evenings or taking small hikes is enough to begin a new path toward healthy physical and emotional living. Exercise affords us energy, satisfaction, and the release of neurotransmitters in the brain that contribute to our sense of well-being and peace. Take a hard look at what you consume daily. If we're shoveling in simple carbohydrate and sugar rich foods, it's very likely we'll feel sluggish and uninspired, and develop other health issues. Make it a point to eat nutrient rich foods, vegetables, fruits, fish, lean meats, fermented foods and other healthy choices. Again, start small if you must! And every now and again indulge yourself. Finding the right balance between diet and exercise will do wonders for your overall health, emotionally and physically. I firmly believe that I didn't experience true recovery, true freedom from the bondage of self, until I began addressing all three of these components, mind, body, and spirit.

If we address the mind, body, and spirit appropriately, we will soon begin to see the level of our anxious fears decrease. Where we were once wracked with guilt and suffering at our seeming inability to help others, we will find a newfound strength that allows us to set firm boundaries and stick with them. Before, we might be easily manipulated by addicted loved one's behavior. In our new lives, we have the vision to see through them. We have the empowerment to set a firm boundary, to stick with it, to truly hold ourselves in loving kindness, knowing that it's the right thing to do. Giving in, providing unnecessary financial assistance, providing shelter, or providing unsolicited support or advice will continuously fail to make a difference. I know from experience. I know that deep down you probably feel it too. Seeing boundary setting and other PAL principles in action can provide you with firm evidence that these programs work and are worth being a part of. For your own life, and the people you care for the most.

Following through and making all of these principles a daily practice will place you in a position to be of maximum service to God and your fellows. Once we've found ourselves on the path to our own healthy living, we can honestly begin to hear new ideas, and let go of the behaviors that held ourselves and loved ones stuck fast. Change begins within us, through the strength of God and through the encouragement of loving, supportive mentorship. I firmly believe that with hard work, reliance on God, open-mindedness, and healthy practical support, anyone can get better. Learn to love yourself and the people close to you. Hold them in your heart. Turn them over to something greater than yourself. You won't regret it for an instant. I'll be here cheering you on.

God Bless, Sean, In Recovery

You can read, comment and ask questions for Sean to address in his blog on the PAL website, Home page – www.Palgroup.org