

ANONYMOUS

THE SUNLIGHT OF REALITY

H O P E

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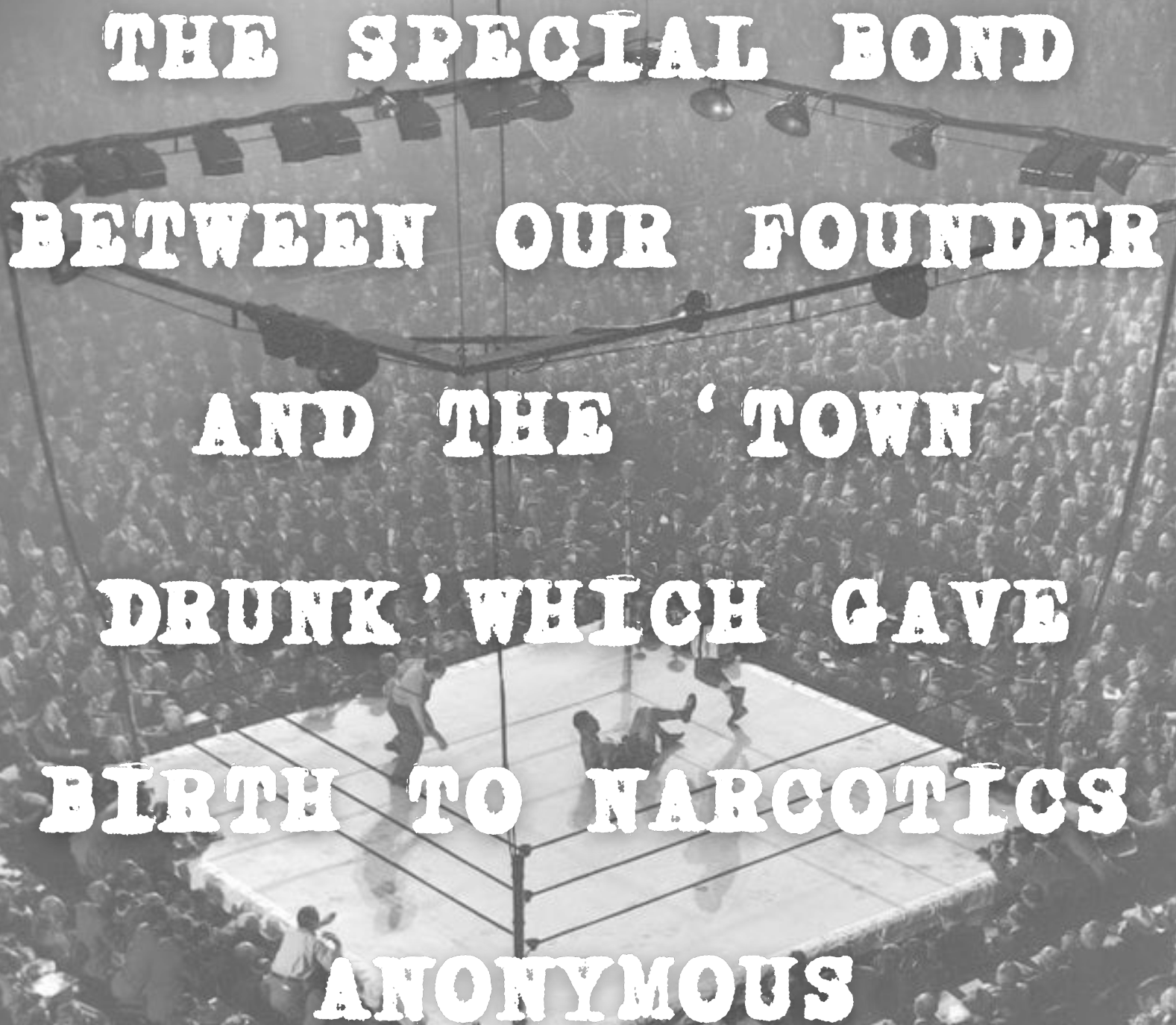
AFP



**“We who have
lived in darkness
and horror for so
long begin to
walk freely
in the sunlight of
reality.”**

Step 3





**THE SPECIAL BOND
BETWEEN OUR FOUNDER
AND THE 'TOWN
DRUNK' WHICH GAVE
BIRTH TO NARCOTICS
ANONYMOUS**

JIMMY K. AND MR CRUIKSHANK

Did an inexplicable bond between a seven-year-old Jimmy Kinnon and the 'town drunk' set in motion a chain of events which led to the founding of Narcotics Anonymous some 34 years later? Stranger things have happened.

Founding member Jimmy K often shared about Mr Cruikshank. He preferred his company to children his own age because of the profound things they would talk about. One day he found the elderly man lying, covered in blood, at the foot of a concrete stairwell. He was unconscious. Jimmy persuaded his mother to phone for an ambulance. Day after day, the seven-year-old was ask his mum if they could visit his friend at the hospital. Eventually, she relented. The visited Mr Cruikshank at the local "nut house". He was alone in a chair and just staring into space. "what's wrong with him?" Jimmy asked.

The bemused youngster just couldn't understand. It was a hard lesson early in life. "He is a sick man. He just drank too much and got hurt too many times," his mum said. At that moment Jimmy found his calling. It was a calling to be of service to others.

"I TOLD MY MOTHER, 'WHEN I GROW UP I AM GOING TO HELP PEOPLE LIKE MR CRUIKSHANK.' I HAVE NEVER FORGOTTEN THAT BECAUSE, AT THAT TIME, I WONDERED WHAT I MEANT. THE COURSE WAS LAID OUT FOR ME. I HAD TO BECOME AN ALCOHOLIC AND AN ADDICT TO FULFIL MY DESTINY."

**"FOR EVERY MINUTE I
STAY RESENTFUL AT
SOMETHING FROM MY
PAST, THAT IS 60
SECONDS I AM NOT
AVAILABLE FOR LOVE IN
THE PRESENT."**



ANONYMOUS

THE DISEASE WILL FIGHT FOR ITS LIFE. THE DISEASE WILL DO ANYTHING TO KEEP US STUCK. WE DO RECOVER. OUR SPIRITUAL CONDITION IS THE BASIS FOR A SUCCESSFUL RECOVERY THAT OFFERS NEW GROWTH. I WAS ABLE TO FIND FREEDOM. I DIDN'T HAVE TO PUT OTHER PEOPLE DOWN TO FEEL BETTER. I'VE GOT A DISEASE THAT ISN'T GOING ANYWHERE. I HAVE THE FREEDOM TO REALISE THAT THE DISEASE IS TRYING TO ROB ME AND BREAK THE HEARTS OF EVERYONE AROUND ME.

A MEMBER



**“In the midst of
winter, I found there
was, within me, an
invincible summer”**

**One member talks about the connection he
feels between the original NA literature and
the work of French philosopher Albert Camus**



It doesn't matter who came up with, arguably, one of the greatest lines in all of NA literature; 'We who have lived in darkness and horror for so long begin to walk freely in the sunlight of reality.' It was God expressing himself in our Group Conscience. It is great for many reasons. We, who have experienced the NA metamorphosis, can all identify with the journey from darkness to light. It is both poetic and potent, filled with hope, hope of finding a power within. The great French thinker and writer Albert Camus composed his 'invincible summer' line some four decades previously, but both pieces of prose feel like spiritual relatives somehow.

'The sunlight of reality' also points us towards the 'Ultimate Reality' in our original Step 3 - 'We are now part of the Ultimate Reality which has brought Order out of Chaos'. What is the 'Ultimate Reality' of which we are now all part? The dictionary definition of ultimate is 'being the best or most extreme example of its kind'. And reality - 'the state of things as they actually exist'. No delusion, no fantasy, no escape from truth. The Steps allow us to see ourselves as we really are. We continue to take personal inventory, confronting our transgressions and shortcomings. The 12 Steps are a spiritual path to the Ultimate Reality, which means we do not have to use. So, the 'sunlight of reality' always reminds me of Camus's 'invincible summer' and signposts me towards the deep moral and spiritual philosophy at the heart of the NA Programme - the Ultimate Reality.

NA DOESN'T TELL
YOU HOW TO PRAY.
IT DOESN'T TELL YOU
WHO YOUR GOD IS.
BUT FOR ME, THE
HIGHEST FORM OF
PRAYER IS THE
WORD 'HELP'.

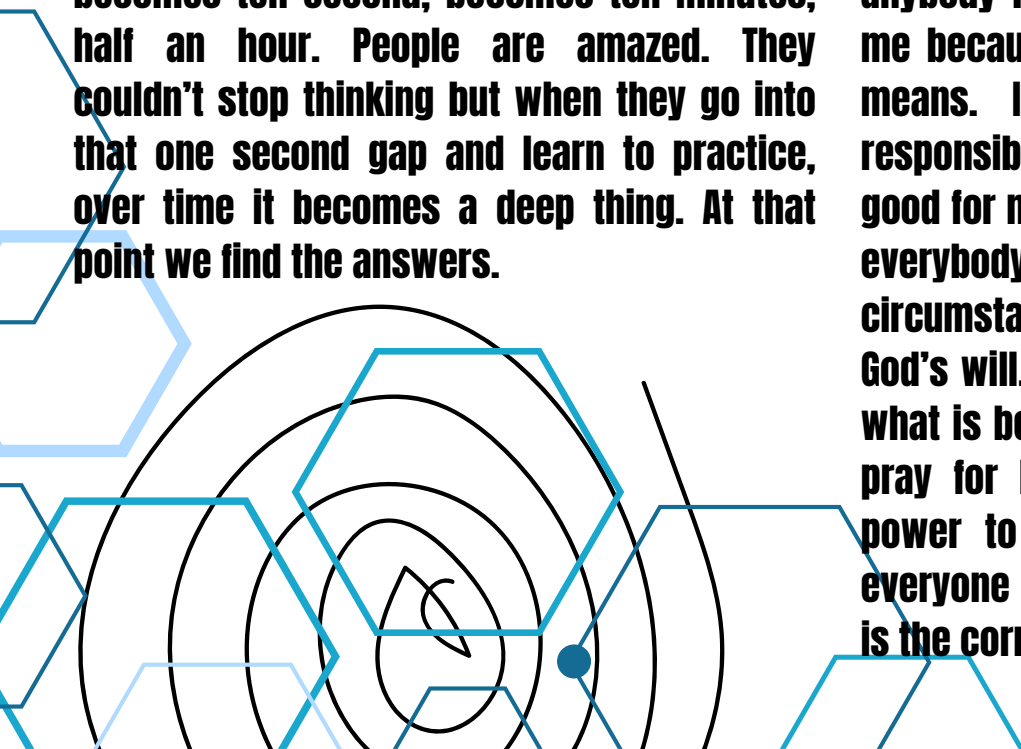
SHARING FOR HIS 64TH ANNIVERSARY, VITO L GAVE US HIS EXPERIENCE ON STEPS 10 & 11

The tenth step is a very old spiritual practice called 'reflection'. And when I reflect my day, and when I see where I went wrong, I admit it to ME. Because if I don't admit it to me then I can't do anything about it in terms of making the same mistakes again. It is ok to make mistakes but it is not ok to keep making the same mistakes over and over again. The 10th step is a very healing process. For the first 20 years I wrote a 10th step. Now when my head hits the pillow I go through a reflection in my head and see where I went wrong and what I can do about it. So I continue to take personal inventory after 64 years in recovery even though it is not written. If you do a written Step 10 for 20 years, you will do it automatically

The Eleventh Step is the cornerstone. We 'sought'... that means we are seekers. We want to fill that big, empty spiritual hole in our belly which we filled with drugs, money, power, sex, food. We are now seeking a spiritual solution. And it says in Narcotics Anonymous that we do this through prayer and meditation. But NA doesn't tell you how to pray. It doesn't tell you who your God is. But for me the highest form of prayer is the word 'help'.

I don't need to say anything else. I say 'help' to an infinite power over me. That's my prayer. Help me with this, help with that. And meditation is just listening and getting quiet, letting the answers come. And Narcotics Anonymous doesn't tell you how to meditate. But you have a thousand different ways. And a lot of people say 'I can't still my mind'. But stilling the mind is a concept that is totally wrong. It is like we have a thought pump... once one thought comes then another one, then another. It is like a heartbeat. But there is a gap between each gap, and if we learn to go into that gap and meditate for God's answer, all of a sudden, that second, becomes ten second, becomes ten minutes, half an hour. People are amazed. They couldn't stop thinking but when they go into that one second gap and learn to practice, over time it becomes a deep thing. At that point we find the answers.

Then we improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him. And 'improving' means we are seeking to find knowledge of God's will for us. And what is God's will for us? I remember sitting around at 90 days clean, drinking coffee, saying I knew what God's will was. What bullshit! I remember I was at a meeting and there was this little, old lady, about 80 years old, her hands all full of arthritis, leaning on a cane, and I started talking about God's will. She took that cane and put it in my face and said: "Kid, you wanna know what God's will is? I'll tell you what God's will is today, tomorrow and forever... it is the highest good for anybody in any situation." And boy that hit me because I know understands what that means. It means taking care of your responsibilities. Not what is the highest good for me but what is the highest good for everybody, not matter what the circumstances, and that will always be God's will. I am an addict and I always want what is best for me but I need to constantly pray for knowledge of God's will and the power to carry that out for the good of everyone concerned. And that's why I say it is the cornerstone.



CONSCIENCE

GREG P.

Awareness of principle, living by principle, awareness of morality - so part of group conscience has to be the idea of instead of having popularity contests, we need to start thinking of things in terms of principle, about what's best for the group. Remember the First Tradition ("Common welfare..."). As far as "ultimate authority" goes, I don't know too many people who struggle with that except those who are so caught up with power and prestige and addiction. Most of us come to realize that ultimately everything is in God's hands and I believe that this Fellowship is in God's hands. The bottom line for me in many things that occur in my life is (and I hope I don't offend anybody by saying it this way, but this is the way I feel it) - this God shit that everybody's talking about had better be for real or I'm fucked. Because you know what, if there is no God, I know that I don't have the power to make my life turn out. So you know, it comes down to a choice of either believing or not believing and I recognize that not believing is a dead-end. And I might be a fool for believing but it's the only shot I got. It's the only shot I got, because personal power fails me absolutely.

“The seventh step talks about humbly asking Him to remove our shortcomings. The eleventh step is a petition for power and knowledge, spiritual direction, not personal power, not intellectual knowledge - spiritual direction. It’s not about “doing it right”, it’s not about me fixing me or me fixing you. It’s about surrendering to principle.”

GREG P.



side en-

las ore-
mas cat-
excessi-

Greg P. was arguably NA's greatest thinker, while at the same time advancing his thesis that a 'non-thinking', anti-intellectual approach to our 12 step programme was the most effective way to gain enlightenment through Anonymity. Just as Greg said that true group conscience could never be carried in a vote, he argued that you could never pass the seventh Tradition. Rather the seventh tradition is why we 'pass a basket'. But he described a more spiritually potent approach to Tradition Seven that we should consider. Here he talks about being self-supporting spiritually, emotionally and mentally. You could, he said, argue that being committed to your home group, turning up as promised and not letting people down, is the physical aspect. Look beyond the salad of conventional wisdom around the words in our Traditions, for deeper meanings, was his suggestion. When you look beyond the idea that this is simply the 'money tradition' and consider that it might be about transformation - no longer the drain on our families and society that we once were.

**“THEY’VE GOT TO GET
THIS BOOK OUT TO THE
ADDICTS...”**

PETE B.

AT HIS FINEST

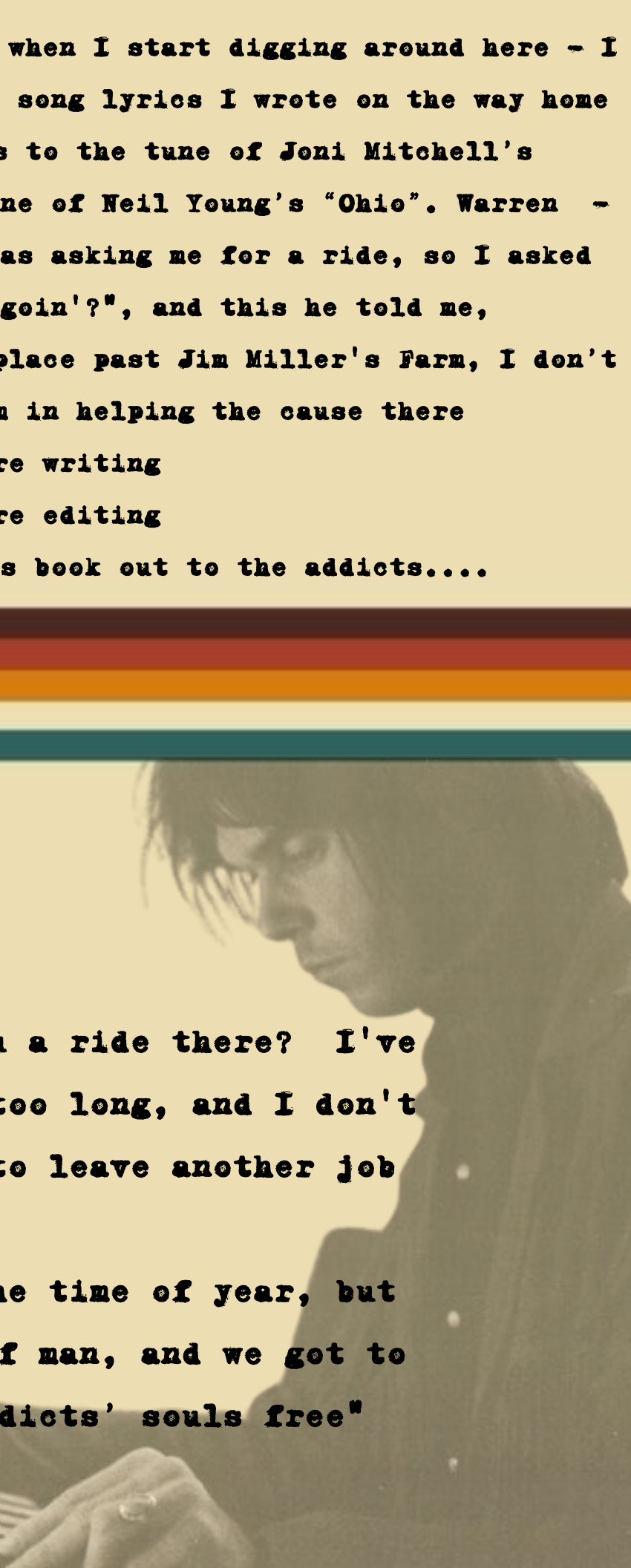


Never know what I'm going to find when I start digging around here - I
Stumbled onto a couple of revised song lyrics I wrote on the way home
from Warren, Ohio - first was to the tune of Joni Mitchell's
"Woodstock". Second was to the tune of Neil Young's "Ohio". Warren -
I came upon my roommate Al, he was asking me for a ride, so I asked
him, "Well, where are you goin'?", and this he told me,
"I'm goin' to Warren, Ohio, to a place past Jim Miller's Farm, I don't
think there'd be any harm in helping the cause there

They are writing

They are editing

And they've got to get this book out to the addicts....



"So you want me to give you a ride there? I've
been sitting here for far too long, and I don't
think it could be wrong, to leave another job
here,

"'Cause maybe it's just the time of year, but
then maybe it's the time of man, and we got to
do what we can to set addicts' souls free"

**We are writing (it's a thousand year-old
problem)**

**We are editing (and now we've found a way
out)**

**And we've got to get this book out to the
addicts...**

**Ohio - Drug addicts are all uniting, we've
finally found a home, This summer I've seen
them writing, Our Book in Ohio, Gotta get
down to it, Drugs have been cutting us
down, Now we have found recovery, Jails,
institutions and death have been our town,
now we can say "C'est La Vie - M Fer"**

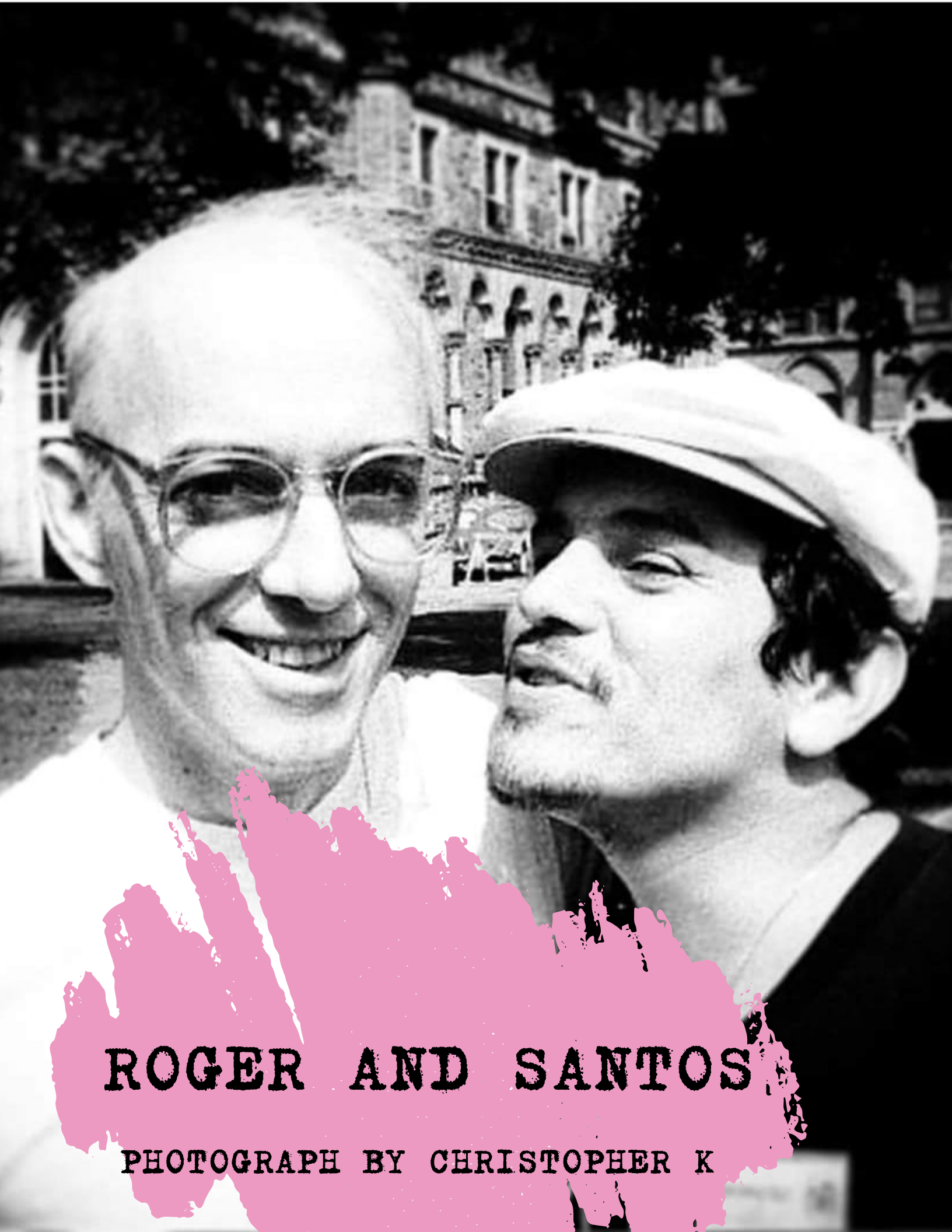


Some time back in the 70s, I was 15 and I had a bottle of Jack Daniel's and it was raining outside. I got home and I was lying on the couch, soaking wet, hugging the empty bottle. And my dad woke up to the sight and he decided to drag me to meetings.

And while I stopped drinking Jack Daniel's, I carried on using for another 17 years. My deal was I wanted to be numb. I didn't want to feel anything and addiction gave me that. In 1990, my older brother, who was also my drug dealer, died of a drug overdose. That really shook me. And that is when I came back to meetings and started to tell partial truths. Not the whole truth... not yet. But it was a process and I am so grateful that I still have a choice today to come to meetings. My clean date is March 5th, 1998 and I still do the very best that I can on a daily basis... because I only have a daily reprieve.

Dawn Marie's Story





ROGER AND SANTOS

PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRISTOPHER K



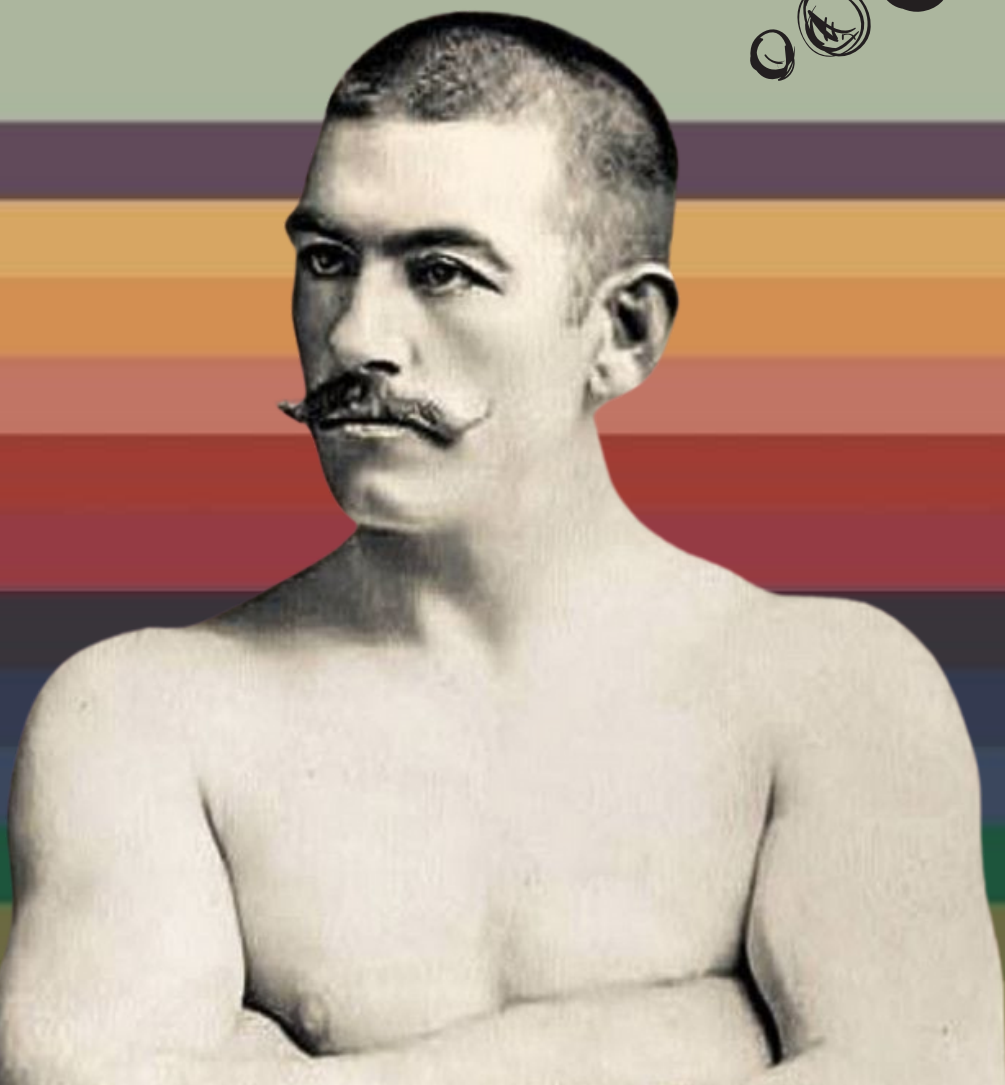
I was raped as a kid. I am not the only one. I was a gangster. Shooting people, stabbing people people, jail stories. There is so much deep emotional healing that I have to experience. I can't just buy a new shirt, put on a nice chain, trainers. I can quote the literature. I know what a pregnant pause is. But all the while, suffering on the inside. Emotional decay is rotting me. But the worst part is over and now it is time to get free.

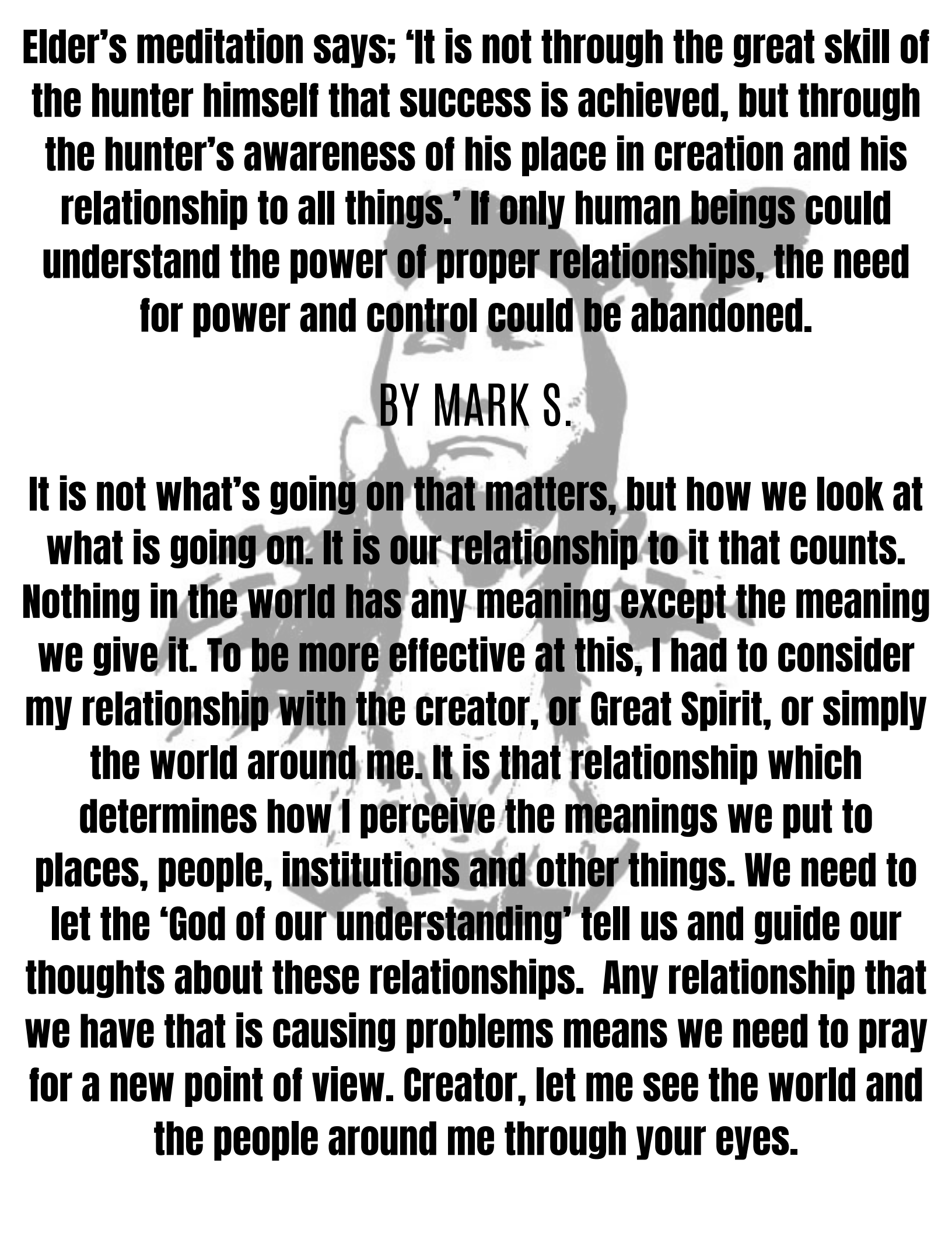


ANONYMOUS



One of our problems is
that we're throwing
words at these
principles and words
are just NOT adequate.





Elder's meditation says; 'It is not through the great skill of the hunter himself that success is achieved, but through the hunter's awareness of his place in creation and his relationship to all things.' If only human beings could understand the power of proper relationships, the need for power and control could be abandoned.

BY MARK S.

It is not what's going on that matters, but how we look at what is going on. It is our relationship to it that counts. Nothing in the world has any meaning except the meaning we give it. To be more effective at this, I had to consider my relationship with the creator, or Great Spirit, or simply the world around me. It is that relationship which determines how I perceive the meanings we put to places, people, institutions and other things. We need to let the 'God of our understanding' tell us and guide our thoughts about these relationships. Any relationship that we have that is causing problems means we need to pray for a new point of view. Creator, let me see the world and the people around me through your eyes.

I was one of the guys who used to say 'I need some of the things I learned from the streets to survive in here'. Well guess what? This is what the Seventh Step says... 'Removing ourselves from the arena in which such games are played'... just like out there in the street, right?... 'exposes us to new ideas. We learned that the rules of the street only made sense on the street. In the

real world, they were crazy and often dangerous.' Isn't that something? We become softer, more vulnerable.

WE LEARN TO CRY.

A MEMBER

