

WIRED VOLUNTEER: MARK DREWETT

Mark Drewett reflects on his journey into recovery and the role that his faith in God and the 12-steps have played.

I have come to accept that I am an addict who suffers with the disease of addiction. Alcohol and drugs are only a symptom of my disease. I firmly believe that the addiction lives in my head and always will. Although I am now 16 months clean, I still have what can be described as a craving. Strangely, not so much for drugs, but alcohol. I often wonder if I could get away with the odd lager or glass of wine with a meal.

I don't have strong desires or an obsession to drink because I surrender my self will to God and my 12-step programme on a daily basis. I know that if I act on self will and put my queries to the test then I will release my addiction all over again. Whilst in early recovery, the desire to use was a lot greater. I had to face up to a lot of painful memories, some of which I'd been put through, others I had caused. Using was all I'd ever known over the years and looking back to childhood I'd been emotionally inadequate, my initial thoughts were to run away and use. I'd lay awake at night trying to justify getting some heroin or a bit of weed. I would wonder what was wrong with me. In time, again, I learnt to accept these thoughts as part of my disease.

As an addict, naturally, I am going to have a desire to use or drink, but I know that if I do then eventually my life will become unmanageable and I will deceive and hurt those around me.

For most of my life I have felt different and uncomfortable around people, mostly because I would isolate myself, even in a crowd. On the outside, I would be the life and soul of the party, a good guy, always willing to give and seemingly 'together'. The truth is I mastered the art of manipulation towards other people and situations. If I manipulated, I could temporarily manufacture my feelings and portray to others the person I longed to be, as opposed to the person I really felt inside. Alone, ashamed, embarrassed, full of self pity, self-loathing and fear. I knew I was self-centred, arrogant, dishonest, selfish and incapable of loving anyone or anything – including myself. I lived to use and used to live.

In recovery and the company of other addicts who shared their experiences, I began to see that I wasn't alone. This for me was and is, a relief, and gives me strength and comfort. By working the 12 steps in the order that they were designed enables me to stop trying to control everything, accept that life doesn't revolve around me. Things aren't always going to go my way and I can't always get what I want. I have faith and trust. My Higher Power (who I call God) will guide me and even if the result isn't what I desired then it was what was meant to be.

To be able to let go of past and current resentments and find forgiveness for myself and others has helped to gift me with an inner peace that I can only find when I accept what is, as God's will.

I still get angry, frustrated, upset and self righteous at times. I can still be arrogant, selfish and demanding. I accept my defects of character.

By giving back to others, being honest about the way I feel, admitting when I'm wrong and the realisation that I am no more or less of a person than anyone else, despite their status, helps to keep me clean.

Having the fellowship of NA and God in my life, I no longer feel alone. To come to the realisation, after many years of struggling, that I am one of God's children like anyone else and to be blessed with His love is a comfort which urges me to want to do my best, on a daily basis to live by my understanding of Jesus' teachings. Today, I try to live, not for me, but for God and others. I have found that my rewards are plentiful. Love, serenity and sobriety are enough for me. I have been given a programme of recovery which I must take responsibility for. I have to put into action to get where I want to be, honestly. Whatever the outcome, what ever happens in my life, is God's business.

Acceptance is the key. So long as I follow this way, I have nothing to fear.

Thank you N/A and praise be to God for giving me my life back. It's a joy to feel human.