



**FAITH, HOPE AND RECOVERY
IN LETTERS
2017**

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Forward

The theme of this collection of “Faith, Hope and Recovery in Letters 2017” is “Triumphs of Life.” The writers from across Tennessee submitted 67 poems and essays that shared their stories of their own triumphs of life, with many perspectives of challenges that confront them and changes that helped them continue their journey. We are sharing 40 of the poems and essays here. You will read about the individual uncertainties and dark times people have endured as well as the feelings of confidence and hope.

We know that the road ahead will continue to have painful periods that cast a shadow over the recovery journey. Please know that everyone struggles in recovery. The writers of this collection of poetry have reflected on what they have experienced in their own journey, but the work of staying confident about the future continues. And the end result is making the most of today.

This year the publication is being shared in an online format with only the cover art of “Purple Mountain” by Kimi Kahara. This year we are not including other original artwork by Healing Arts Project, Inc. artists.

Thank you to all the writers you shared their thoughts and stories for this publication. We are all wiser for the messages shared. We dedicate this book with appreciation to all those who have shared their stories.

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Why Me

Aaron Heath

Why me, I ask

Did I spend 20 years of my life using, abusing, and trying to get more drugs?

This world doesn't have laws, there is no racism, no boundaries, only hurt, shame, and disappointment. The world is not a place everyone can survive in, have possessions, feel safe, or have friends. This place is dark, cold, and there is no potential there. The way of life in this world is to get or get out.

There are three major escape routes from this world, jails, institutions, or death.

For a small amount of special people there is a fourth way out. This way only a few have been able to live a productive, successful, and meaningful life outside this world, and even after escaping and experiencing the good life they are pulled back into the dark world to lose everything they gained while clean. Of that small amount that escape, only 1/10 of a 10th manage to escape this world entirely and stay out for good. Methods of escaping includes, rehab centers, court programs, church, and just walking away, in which the latter is the hardest way to escape.

Escape from this world can provide great rewards, only to be stripped away when the person chooses to pay a visit to people, places and things of their old world. To gain any amount of freedom from the powers of this world is great progress and can lead to greater opportunities. But first one must gather his or herself, then reach out from within, seek, search and ask for help.

Then and only then will one be ready to admit they have a problem. So, now I ask: why not me!

Rainbow After the Rain
Emily Humerick

They tell me “one day at a time” and “just for today.”
I know I am strong, or at least, that’s what they say.
I am not alone in this journey, now that I have reached out.
I am trying to see what this “serenity” is all about

Looking back on my past all I can say is PRAISE!
It’s a wonder that I made it through several of those days.
Now I am helping others get to where I am now.
I have to share this feeling of joy I have found somehow.
I had to give up something I considered a friend.
But now I know it would have been my demise, it would have been my end.
I thank God for this journey, I thank God for my pain.
Because now I understand there can’t be a rainbow without the rain.

The Butterfly
Rachel Presley

In recovery we are all like butterflies. Butterflies come in all shape and sizes, they all have different ways of doing things. Like us in our own recovery it may take us a little longer to do things than others and it does not just happen overnight. Just like butterflies they go through stages in its life. We also go through stages in our recovery to make us who we are. To become better people. The butterfly repeats the stages one must go through in his or her recovery.

Faith in Recovery

Cynthia Berry, Kayla Holloway, Joel Paddon, Araya Spears, Kevin Tolson

Even with all your Faith
Everything you do won't be safe.
Even when you lose your Trust
Staying positive is a must.

When my head is full of guilt,
My soul begins to wilt.
One way to Recovery
Is to fight to be happy.

Suffering and Pain are one in the same.
Our Demons we must tame.
To build self-respect
Our Fate we must accept.

No doubt Recovery is hard work.
So sometimes I go berserk.
When my Spirit is broke
My friends bring me Hope

Why Do We?
Melanie Brander

Try so hard to figure out why?
We search for answers in street drugs and booze.
When in the end it's our minds we lose.
Can't we see where the light still hides?
And look at our illness from all its different sides?
Instead we run to the land of denial.
Willing to give even anger one more fair trial.
Finally, in running we hit the big wall.
Fear driving us to run away from yet another fall.
But then we are sent that one special friend.
Who knows us but loves us through thick and thin.
Peer support is what medical records call it.
Love and understanding makes that puzzle piece fit.
No, I'm sorry. Or how will you live?
Just a hug and a true listener with a heart to give.
We run so hard to find what's already there.
Someone to love us, know us and show they care.
I ran from job to job hoping to find me.
We act and feel like we want to just die.
When Centerstone was always there to show me HAPI.
Now I heal through my words.
I can speak to so many whose voices haven't been heard.
The soldiers who are weary from all their battles.
The wives and the children whose lives have been rattled.
I speak to the professionals who know so much more.
But the voice of experience in my heart has been restored.
So, my, "Triumph of Life," over, why do we?
Is to speak up and speak out through my friend HAPI!

Shattered Glass

Brian Newman

You're waking up in my car
For now, we both are safe
Where you roll into
Becomes my favorite place
-So, lay your head down for a while
And just exist tonight
Later, we'll drive around
No one's looking now
-I want to hear
How your day was spent
Think I could know all they can't comprehend
Do you want to see
A smile that comprehends
-After they bleed your dreams of hope
Where do they run?
Who will stitch them up when you call?
Why do you run home before it's time?
But that's a secret yours to keep and not mine
Through the shattered glass you see it all
And sometimes our visions get so broke
We can't see at all
Don't let the rocks they throw
Shatter all you're hoping for
-Behind a broken telescope
Last night you found your star
Between the broken strings
A best friend plays your song
With a broken pen, I'm writing you letters
To be read aloud, on the radio
About the moments we're drunk
On the moonbeam's undertow
In that same coffeehouse
Where your smile first shone
-So, lay your head down for a while
And just exist tonight
Later on we'll drive around
No one's looking now

-After your star burns out where does it fall?
We could go pin it back up, let me know
Someone needs to take a picture before your smile is stolen
Another dollar for some fuel
Is all we're waiting on
Off into that marble sky we drove
And never looking back
-Cause no one's going to hang our portraits once we've gone
But that's a secret ours to keep and the world will never know
Through the shattered glass we see it all
And sometimes our visions gets so broke
We can't see at all
Don't let the rocks they throw
Shatter all we're hoping for
-Hey, I'm always, here to answer when you call
For a while we'll drive around
Then I'll take you home
I will not be cut-by the shattered glass
From the rocks they like to

We are the Best Things They Threw Away

Brian Newman

I am newer in spirit than these ragged clothes
I am more complete than my broken home
I am not fractured in character like your heroes are
I am in a braver world than you might decide
From the timid smile I dwell behind
-And we are the best things They threw away
And we are the next ones to save the day
We are always exceptions to the rules
Tell that little child Next it could be you
You are the best thing, They threw away
The best thing, They threw away
-Saw you in that busted telescope
Out in your own little Atmosphere
Orbiting all the moments you hold dear
Out of reach of everyone you've come to fear
-My friend you are worth more than you know
Maybe you've been pinned down by their heavy words and sold
Maybe tonight is time to check the scars
In any given moment, you may spread your wings and fly
That's why I always say a sweet goodbye
-And we are the best things They threw away
And we are the next ones to save the day
We are always exceptions to the rules
Tell that little child Next it could be you
You are the best thing, They threw away
The best thing They threw away

I Am THAT Woman
Stephenie Crisp

Who do you see when you look at me? There are many layers to the woman you see today. These are the things inside this woman.

There are days that I still feel like a scared little girl. There are other days that I feel like my own super hero. There are still days that I have to pick up the pieces and put myself back together from my previous life. I have finally come to see that IT IS OKAY!

It is okay to be vulnerable, open, honest, broken. I am a paradoxical woman. I am weak yet strong. I am hurt by others not willing to love more than most. I am broken but I am healed. I have been done wrong but I have found the peace to forgive.

I Am THAT Woman!

From the Addict to the Treatment Center
Alice Jessen

Recovery asks me to abandon everything I know. Just remind me that it's worth it and that I am worth it. Show me mercy, because my fear of the unknown future commands me to self-destruct.

I am so grateful for this opportunity and I pray that you will believe this even when I don't always act like it. I'm constantly learning, even if I'm just storing the information for later. The compassion you show me I can't forget, even if it's something I can't yet implement. Your time isn't wasted. It might take me one time or it might take me 100 times but as long as I am alive I have a chance to change and you have a chance to understand. Please don't give up on me even after I've given up on myself. Keep showing me a world of hope, because your faith, love, and encouragement are literally all I have to hold on to. God has put us all here for a reason, and as a result of you, my breakthrough might even happen today.

My Triumph
Paul Fontenot

He stood there looking at the giant before him. It looked so formidable and so unconquerable. In front of the giant stood a wall so tall and thick that it too looked unmovable. The giant was called "Stigma" the wall was called Ignorance and Fear. He knew these obstacles well, they had held him back for years. But today they were both going down and being conquered in his life. His life would be free of those obstacles created by a society that just did not understand, and did not know how.

But how would he do it? How would he slay the giant and knock down the wall? He would step up and shout out, find his own voice, and speak loudly to the obstacles. The life of the giant was silence and the mortar of the wall was Fear. He stepped up to the giant and the wall and shouted "Enough!!!" No more silence, no more fear. Only triumph and the hearing of my voice. I am coming out of the shadows, out from behind the obstacles. Triumph is mine, and I will speak out and claim my victory."

The giant began to tremble, the wall to crack and sway. He repeated his words... "Enough!! No more silence, no more fear." He found his own voice and spoke triumph and hope. The giant fell and the wall crumbled. Behind them was a bridge he had never seen before. A sign that read "Hope." Beyond it was another sign: "Welcome to Triumph." He stood and looked with tears of joy at last and began his journey of hope and Triumph. He was no longer alone, for with him now were Faith, Hope, and Recovery. He looked to heaven and heard a voice say, "Safe Journey."

Sand Pebbles Passing Through an Hourglass

Sandra Cox

To be like a sand pebble through an hourglass going down one grain at a time and living one second at a time is for me and this is my daily life. But to triumph over the slowness of this time and the pebble going down the hourglass you have to think of ways to make your life speed up and make you happy and not think of the sand pebble slowly going to the bottom of the hourglass.

But how do you accomplish this feat. Well you could start out with specialized doctors to help get you started and maybe meds to help you along the way and these things did help me and I did make progress and my sand pebbles began to flow a little faster to the bottom of the hourglass but I still needed some more motivation. Well my next step was to get into a group setting and to talk about my mental issues and to learn how to socialize in public again and I have had to let go of a lot of past issues that have held me back and I have seen a difference in my attitude and behaviors. These triumphs have caused so many more sand pebbles to flow easier to the bottom of the hourglass.

God's Love

Donna Cranmore

To me God's love is wonderful and amazing to be simple yet so immense to fully realize that there is someone who could love me each and every day always in the same unchanging way as God's love of me.

Filled with amazing grace and peace like a gentle breeze through my hair feels like God is already there, covering me when I am cold, comforting me when I am sad, cheering me on in my happy times. Yes, God's love is the purest love that I know for each and every day God is helping me to grow.

Pushed
Clarence Legg

When I pushed through the fire,
I had the desire
To live a life of being free
After I was Seven
I tried Seagram's '7'
And I thought Life was never going to be the same for me
After my mother died
I had too much pride
For anyone to ever help me
Now that I am done
I thought I was having fun
Drinking myself to death
But deep down I've found
A new Joint called Turning Point
And everything seems to be working out just fine.

My Triumphs in Life
Marta Hernandez

In a corner lie my hopes and dreams
As a little child in misery
My future so dark I could not see
When a shining light in the sky I see

Of torture and fear my eyes were filled
And great disappointments in life I feel
Not giving up yet I can be free
Hope came to my door and I let it in

Many years has passed and I got worse
Everything I believed was forever lost
It was at that moment I looked to the sky
And I see light shining through the gray clouds

There were many doors for me to choose
Confusion took over but I refused
To choose out of fear the clearest road
I rather choose pathways with the biggest rocks

I climb fierce fully to the mountain top
I can smell victory so I did not stop
My triumphs in life took time to achieve
That is why I encourage you to believe

I never looked back I had no time
When you look at the past the future dies
I convince myself there was more to come
It was with this attitude that I overcome

St Francis of Assisi

Christie Elise Jones

Little flowers that shrink the viewer
Into a cherub, sweet and small,
Magically protected from the hewer,
Borne away from evil with a call
He sits to think upon a mossy rock,
While attending a chalk talk,
The blackboard, ruled by angels high,
Teaches him his first Latin lullaby

Triumphs of Life

Juanita Webb

Life is a challenge to overcome the barriers such as the flood in 2010, during which I almost lost my home. My peers suggested that I go and relieve the pain of what I was going through. I almost had a nervous breakdown, but I didn't go to the hospital. It was a triumphant time in my life. I still have the house.

Today, my eyes are open now. Today, I will succeed the rest of my life triumphantly. There was a time that my condition got out of control, so I thank God for my active brain. I am strong and mindful of what is going on around me. As my mind continues to blossom, I overcome today's society and I am well known with respect. Somehow, I'll find strength to reach out to God in faith and hope. My strength turns into hope. My goal is to keep doing what I do as far as the voices are concerned. My triumph never ends. Today, I am happy and I have a bright future. This story is about my triumphs in life and the obstacles I have prevailed.

Adopting Changes

Rachael Lane

I am the type who does not like people telling me how to feel who have never experienced the same situation. Through Frontier Health in Greeneville, I met a mental health worker who has a similar story to me. I love having a mental health worker who I don't have to tell how I feel.

I have made several changes in the past year. I started playing basketball a few times a week. Also, I hated to read, but I am currently reading my 9th book since last year. I used to lay around a lot, but now I try to be more active. I am much happier these days. I am more out-going. I plan to set more goals in the future and work to accomplish those goals. Also, since I started mental health treatment, I successfully live by myself with help.

Faith, Hope, and Recovery

John Paul Tetzeli

In my struggle with mental illness, I have come to realize the importance of faith and hope in recovery. What do faith and hope mean to me? Faith is the ability to believe in things unproven; hope is the belief that things will get better, even though it may not seem that way. Both faith and hope are transcendental, meaning that they allow us to go beyond our physical circumstances; and both emerge from the free will, meaning that they are deliberate choices. I would go further in saying that both faith and hope are gifts, and we have the freedom to choose to accept or reject them.

Recovery means overcoming your symptoms so that you can function in the world. Why are faith and hope important in recovery? Because faith and hope allow you to transcend your circumstances so that you are no longer defined by your symptoms.

In my darkest hours, I am engulfed by my voices and depression. With medication and psychotherapy, and through a lot of struggle, I am able to emerge from that dark valley. The struggle involves first summoning the gifts of faith and hope from the depths of my being and dealing with the fear and sadness and emptiness and despair. The struggle involves using my coping skills and techniques and applying all my cognitive-behavioral tools. The coping techniques that help the most are prayer and meditation and journaling. My cognitive-behavioral tools include adopting the perspective of the hopeful narrator: so often, with my illness, I am overcome with hopelessness, despair, and fear; I learn to narrate my life story with hopefulness-I see life as a gift, that I am learning, that learning is a process, and with God's help I can respond positively to any situation.

Faith and hope are key to my recovery because through them I can overcome.

Recovery is a Dove

John Paul Tetzeli

Recovery is a dove
Carrying a message of faith and hope
Flying high above the city,
Then perched on a telephone wire
At dawn.
While the city
Looks upon the sunrise
The light from the eastern sky is reflected from the windows of the buildings.
I awaken and arise
To a new day.

Courage to Face the Truth

Julie Fann

My will to survive has demanded that I face the truth about my father's mental illness as well as my own. My recovery has also hinged upon my ability to comprehend and accept the state of my very broken, dysfunctional family and my role in it. I have managed, thankfully, to move beyond these painful truths to live a decent life free of debilitating pain and to embrace contentment with who I am and what I've achieved. I'm proud of myself for earning a master's degree in English, for having the courage to work several challenging jobs, and for the friendships I've made on this rocky path.

Along the way I've also learned how to accept my feelings without needing to understand them and to let someone love me for who I am instead of who they want or need me to be. I have acknowledged my needs and figured out how to honor and express them. To a degree, these are common aspirations for all humans, because the journey to become a whole, functioning adult in society is full of twists and turns and hard work, whether you battle mental illness or not. For those of us who do, though, finding contentment with and understanding of who we are bridges the vast chasm between giving up completely and moving forward with hope.

Feelings
Debbie Baranowski

Why couldn't I feel?
What's the deal?
I need to be real!
Whether it's happy or sad,
Whether it's angry or mad,
I am glad, for the feelings I've had!

Take Me Away
Debbie Baranowski

Take me away from the harsh realm of reality.
From the plane of negativity.
To the place full of fantasy and desire.
From a world so dire.
From the place where love strives and fails.
To a place where our love will thrive and prevail.
From the world so degrading.
From a world so complicating.
To a paradise where everything will be fine.
Take me away to a paradise so pure and divine.

Life
Donald Drake

On this day, yes on this day, I got down on my knees and prayed and what I heard from up above. It came to me with so much Love.

Life ain't nothing but a lesson. He said a little light goes a long long way so listen now to what I have to say. Trials and tribulations will come your way. Still life ain't nothing but a lesson.

He grabbed my hand and said come walk with me into my temple then you will see the walk of life is eternal. Still life ain't nothing but a lesson.

Understanding Your Friend
Arnold Bledsoe

Understanding your friend is like knowing a person when you first meet him or her
Knowing their likes and dislikes and what they prefer
Like going out and having fun
That is when a friendship has just begun
Like being loving caring when they are sad
When nobody understands them but you
Like sharing and caring about what they say and do
When their past haunts them, you are right by their side
And you'll forever be each other's guide

To My Son: A Labor of Love
Patricia Cupp

There is still much stigma and prejudice
surrounding illness of the mind and emotions
I feel helpless to save my child from his abyss.

The child my body nurtured is now a man.
Hopes and dreams so close to my heart.
Somehow life has changed the plan.

Did I love him too little or too much?
Sometimes I come to terms with the questions.
Other times all I can do is give him a gentle touch.

His depression and confusion is beyond my control.
If I could hold him in my arms as I did after his birth.
What joy it would be to sooth his tortured soul.

As varied as labors and laborers can be,
So is my laboring for him now.
My goal now is to set his mind free.

I Choose Hope
Amber Rogers

I choose to have the hope that things will get better. That there is a clear day around the corner. The hope that others will understand me. When days are clear, I feel I can help others. With the hope that they understand and my teachings, I choose today to be happy and smile. To love myself, and think happy thoughts.
The hope I can tell others when something is wrong, or I need help. I choose to have hope, joy and love each and every day. To clear away all the negative thoughts. I choose to have the hope that things will get better!

The Light Behind the Mask

Linette M. Pace

Here I sit years later, pondering how I have reached this point. The point of Victory! This point of triumph over evil. I realize that it has been a long, hard road to travel. The Battles have been many. There have been a lot of days that I felt like I could not go on. Days that I did not want to go on and tried my hardest not to go on. The Glimmers of Light have been my saving grace. The holes within the armor have been my Healing. My Power. My Choices, My Decisions have been within my control all this time.

The path that I chose varied and the path I choose continues to be bumpy, rugged and unknown. The journey continues, day by day. My Guiding Light never fails me though. My Glimmering, Shimmering, Glowing Light has always been within me even while I have been in the very depths of Nothingness. My shimmering Armor of Victory, rusty from years of neglect, continues to shine. Shining brighter today than yesterday as I continue to polish and forgive. Someday soon the Light may even blind you. Watch Out, the beacon beckons! I shall be a Light in the Darkness.

My Identity, My Triumph

Jennifer Grayson

Learning to accept myself for who I am and how I am is a major triumph for me. I have lived my life trying so hard to please everyone else or even be like someone else that somehow, I became lost. Now that I have found myself I am sorting through the parts of me I like, and those that must remain hidden away in the past. I will plant the good seeds, nurture them, and see them grow into the person I was always meant to be. I will form a foundation, and develop myself as honorable, humble, and kind. I will smile, and it will be a smile that comes from a heart that is healing. A smile that will light up my face, and warm my soul. All my doubts about myself will be washed away. All the anxiety and fear will be replaced with the triumph and confidence that renew my spirit.

My Recovery

Treva Allen, Angie Frazier, Wilma Mount, Joel Paddon, Donnie Pavatte

All living things must breathe.
All people must stand with their own boundaries.
When I go to bed, I feel relief.
Like a sandwich made with government cheese.

I take a shower to take care of my hygiene,
I got to take care of my own coping skills.
Like a tree in the wind with our roots grounded.
I got to take care of my own bills.

Sometimes I do not like to take my medication.
Learning about myself is my hope.
I use my mind to avoid procrastination.
Don't be a fool by doing dope.

Trust makes me faithful.
I like to sing at church.
I thank God that I am grateful.
Prayer helps me with my sear

When my illness is my plight,
Recovery is something I should not avoid.
Happiness helps me not to fight.
So, my heart is filled with joy.

Triumph of Life
Donnie Pavatte

Sliding down rainbows
Watching the wind blow
Building a snowman in the first winter's snow
Building sandcastles in the white sand
Making the most of all that is in hand
Yesterday is dead and gone
Tomorrow may never come
Live every minute!!
It's over too soon.

Triumphant Garden
Betty Kirkland

My life is not having a garden
My life is not having a family
My life is what I have before me
I can look at the flowers and dream
I have my friends who love me at TMHCA
I learn new things from Linette, she is a good teacher
I go to the dollar store to make wishes and sometimes they come true
I am growing in my recovery every

Triumph Over Hurt
Daylon Murphy

My Mom was an addict and my family was unstable. To cope with all of that I started using too. When I did all the hurt was gone.... but not really.

It wasn't until December 10th when I moved in with my Aunt and Uncle that all the hurt truly went away.

My life has been good; I have a place to come home to, I have a place that helps me cope.

The hurt is gone.... really.

All I Can Do Is All I Can Do
Jennifer Grayson

All I can do is all I can do, and today I will do my best.

There was a time in my life when I didn't believe that my best was good enough. There was a time when I didn't believe that I was good enough, but that was before. Before I learned that what I feel inside is not because I am flawed, not because I am not trying and not certainly because I am a bad person.

There was a time when I was sad...all the time, and it wasn't because I had a terrible life. Or that things were typically any worse for me than those around me. And it certainly wasn't because I was a bad person.

There was a time when I was shy and anxious. When I would feel sick at the thought of being around others, even those who professed to love me. But that was before I realized that I was loveable and mostly that I loved myself. I was not a bad person.

All I can do is all I can do. I can accept who I am and how I am because I am so wonderfully created by God, and he is the maker of beautiful things.

I have a gift, the gift of compassion and empathy for those who share a lot of the same feelings I hold deep inside of me. All I can do is share with them and listen to them and remind them that they are not their illness.

Today I will do my best and if I falter I will find the strength to keep going. I will not get bogged down in fear and I will do my best.

Wonders of the World
Kimberly Redmond

The sunshine's brightly,
Its rays remind me of the Lord's spiritually light from above
The sky so blue goes on forever
Helps me know there is a universe created behind what the eye can see.
The clouds float in the sky like cotton allows me to reach beyond my dreams.
The rain falls on summer's day and I dream of a double rainbow so colorful.
The mountains allow me to reach and feel like I'm in the Heaven's above.
The crashing waves of the ocean bring me tranquility and peace.
The whistling winds blowing through the trees make me calm with ease.
The snow so white and pure glistening on the ground sits there without a sound.
These are the wonderful wonders of the world.

Peace
Christopher Davidson

Peace forever flows within my soul.
It's not mine to keep, but to share with others.
Peace I give to you. Peace I leave you.
My hopes are heaven bound.
They are all filled by the One.
Who gave his life for me.
The peace I came to know, so we must keep
fighting the battle. Can you tell the definition.
By the end of the day we win the victory.
We say we all live in peace beside our brother, together.
In arms united we were created to fulfill the role as peace keepers.
We found the elixir of peace, "courage."

Looking Beyond the Pain

Sandra Pope

I am here, I am there. Where am I going? There are things in my past that caused me pain. Now I am looking beyond the pain.

How do I overcome? Simply put, pray and live your life like it was your last. Let go of the past. Let go and let God. It works. When you look beyond the pain of the past, cast your cares upon Him, for he cares for you. You become whole and new. Looking beyond the pain of the past, let it go. Let go and let God. Looking at the pain of the past, give it all to Him that you have.

Holding Onto Your Faith

Sandra Pope

Faith is the substance of things to hope for. The guidance of things unseen.

I will hold onto your faith until you find your own. Beauty is found in faith. No more sorrow. No more pain. You only have the future to gain.

Faith springs eternal. Faith gives life to a dying soul. Faith gives you another chance at life. Another shot at becoming who you can be.

Faith brings peace, love and joy to the drowsy soul.

When you travel on your journey, just remember to take faith along. You will need it wherever you go.

Hold onto your faith because it is a precious jewel of which we grow. As we travel and as we go, hold onto your faith.

If you can't, I will hold on to it for you. God bless you on your recovery journey, for it is awesome.

Hold on and fight hard for your faith. It is precious. It is rare.

How to Shine

David Johnson

I shine like the sun that is so bright in the spring time
I shine like the stars that light up the sky at night
I shine like all of the seasons that come and go each year
I shine like the lights that are kept on at night
I shine because of all the friends and family that I have in my life
I shine because of the positive side of me and because positive thinking
is such a part of me
I shine because of all the above and I am not going to allow anyone to
steal my shine away from me, including my friends and family

THIS IS HOW I SHINE

Friends

David Johnson

Friends are good to have:

Especially the ones that you can count on when you need someone to talk
to and who will be there for you when you need them the most.

Friends can be very helpful when you are down and out.

Friends don't let you down, especially if they are a true friend in your
life.

Just remember one thing, "When you have a true friend or friends in your
life, please remember one thing, hold onto them."

Friends can even be your family members. Sometimes these are the best
friends that you could possibly have. Even a person that you just met for
the very first time can become the best friend that you have ever had.

Remember, friends are hard to come by. So, if you have a friend or
friends keep them close to your heart. Show them the love that you have
inside.

The Second Journey

Susan Antkowiak

We all go through journeys in life, some very quickly, some very enduring, and we all keep changing, we constantly evolve.

I evolved into a person that loves others for who they truly are inside and out.

The old statement that the only thing in life that is constant is change. I really ponder that daily. It is actually my mantra.

I wake up refreshed daily looking to the challenges I may encounter as the day unfolds. Even though I never experienced that love I thought I should have received. I embrace the expectations of my “Little Peeps” as I call the students of life in a peer support group sharing their hurts, fears and joys they encounter.

It has taken 65 years to have a clear and precise attitude in my mental, emotional and physical health. One feeds on the other. Some are born with it, others have to learn it to achieve it.

My best advice is to be thankful for every little blessing, and also every disappointment and knowing that there are loving, caring others all around you with open arms. They may not say or do exactly what you want, but what you want may sometimes not be what you need for your recovery.

Hope, faith and love are yours for the asking. Make it your daily mantra. For your purpose and what Is meant to be.

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