

Hi my name is S

I grew up in a Christian family and attended church all my life. I went to a private Christian high school and attended chapel every day. I knew the Christian-ese by heart. I knew God's way was the only way to happiness, I knew he loved me no matter what, I knew he could change me, I knew I had to forgive, I knew I had to accept, I knew I had to be compassionate, faithful, gentle, patient and kind. There was just one problem. I didn't know HOW. Every sermon, bible study and women's retreat I ever sat in, I heard all about how I was supposed to be and act. You need to forgive. How? You need to be patient. How? I would wait and wait for the how. It never came. They always said just pray and read your Bible and he would hear you and answer your prayers. But I was praying and reading like crazy and I could not seem to change my bitterness, my anger, my reactions. I behaved in ways I detested but couldn't seem to stop acting that way. It was frustrating and confusing. I pleaded with God on a regular basis. It seemed he did not hear me.

After 21 years of marriage, a divorce brought me to an all-time low in my life. A friend asked me to try a recovery group with her for eight weeks and I decided to accompany her. More for her than for me, of course. But it was there that I sat in a room of women for the first time where I actually felt like I belonged. They spoke of the way they used to be before their spiritual awakening and I related to every word of it. I was shocked and oddly excited. These women were happy. They were content. I could see the peace in their faces. And I wanted it. My friend left the group after a few weeks but I stayed. I began attending other recovery groups as well, and eventually I got a sponsor who walked me through the 12 steps. Slowly but surely, I saw change occurring in me and in my life. One small success led to another. I began to understand what I had heard in church all those years about being willing, letting go and letting God, peace beyond circumstances... all the 'cliches' I'd recited for years but had never felt in my own life. I began to feel peace for the first time. I knew I'd finally had a spiritual awakening of my own.

After five years, I decided to join Big Book Awakening and walk through the 12 steps again. This time, it was in a different format and God used that to draw me even closer, peel the onion back a little further. Recovery has taught me the joy of humility, the joy of admitting and facing my character defects, the joy of making amends, the joy of complete honesty. BBA brought me even closer to God and I have continued in the weekly BBA groups, sharing what I have learned and learning even more from other people who have also discovered the key to happiness -- a life truly submitted to God. Only HE can change me. I always *knew* that but now I had the HOW. Praise God!

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Hi my name is L

I was in Big Book Awakening (BBA) for an entire year. I am a recovery leader for Celebrate Recovery in Apollo Beach, Florida , but it was through BBA I was able to come out of the state of denial. I began with the Controller/Fixer/Obsessor Study and had no idea that it was such a huge problem. I learned that I was never truly trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ who is my Higher Power. I am still learning to lean on His understanding and not my own, because I have not fully arrived. I have released these codependent tendencies and allow people to help me. I do not try to fix them or control them so that I may “feel” safe. This led me into my next BBA study about my food related problems.

I learned I was a compulsive overeater not an emotional eater. This was part of an addiction to a suppressed feeling due to childhood trauma. I would have never understood this if it was not for those weeks coming out of denial. Denial is a mask for many and when I took off my mask, I learned so much about myself. Because of God through BBA, I have been sugar free for over a year and my body and health is improving. All those years of neglect and abuse due to denial was killing me. Like a drug addict or an alcoholic, denial will kill us and kill us slowly. It brings fear, torment, anxiety, and imprisonment, but with God those bars were open for my freedom, and I thank my Sponsor and Sister in Christ ‘W’ for her love and sincerity.

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