

CALL IT FAITH

I RECALL HUFFING GAS WHEN I WAS ABOUT 11 YEARS OLD AND HAVING A lot of fun feeling strange and out of it. I huffed so much I passed out. I found myself surrounded in hazy whiteness and walking toward a man who looked an awful lot like the picture I'd seen of Jesus. I was saying, "Hey!" but he shook his head and said, "Go back, it's not your time." I woke up on the floor of my friend's garage. He was gone. I guess he had left me for dead—which maybe I was.

I started drinking at 13, and I remember being able to talk to people and do things I always wanted to do but was afraid to try. In ninth grade I was kind of nerdy, but for my age I could play guitar quite well. There was a cool long-haired rocker guy in my class—the guy all the girls liked—so when he asked me if I wanted to play in a band, it was a no-brainer. I learned that girls were drawn to me when I grew my hair long (it was the '80s). Soon, going to parties and getting laid was all I wanted to do. By the time I was 19 I was drinking and smoking pot every day. My mom kicked me out and I ended up homeless and in my first rehab. But it wasn't long before I was out and back in party mode—willing to try whatever drug was around—so by the time I was 20 years old I was shooting crystal meth. I remember my exact thought the first time: This is what I've been looking for my whole life, and this is what I'm going to do for the rest of my life. Even though I was more satisfied than I had ever been before, I still couldn't

get enough. But I knew I'd found my drug of choice. I felt like a sex god and was on top of the world.

Eventually I started to lose my mind, and that took a lot of the fun out of it. Seeing laser beams in the sky, thinking my friends were cops, thinking aliens were taking over people's bodies, believing everyone was spying on me with cameras from the astral plane or through a hole in the wall that I could never find. I was time-traveling and unraveling the code in the English language. For a while I thought I was the second coming of Jesus—other times the devil, God, a misplaced being from another planet, and a destroying angel.

I couldn't work because I couldn't think right. Words would change before my eyes. Phone numbers, too. Eventually the friends I'd crash with would catch on and kick me out. I remember going to my best friend's house—he opened the door a crack and said, "Sorry, bro, you can't kick it here." I became the guy nobody wanted around. I ended up in another friend's cellar. I was sitting on the front porch (because I couldn't be trusted with a key) and waiting for him to come home. It was cold and snowing hard. I finally saw myself as others must have seen me, and thought, Dude, you're pathetic. I don't know why I couldn't see that before. That was about my last friend, and after he kicked me out, I was in detox for the seventh or eighth time. I wanted a better life but didn't want to do it without meth. At the same time, I realized that, for me, the two couldn't go together.

I wanted to get it together but I thought, Why try? Eventually I will just do meth again and sell everything and end up right back here. I felt hopeless. I started to look for someone who had been off meth for years to ask them how they did it. I didn't find anybody at that time, but someone who was working at the detox told me, "Get a 'Big Book' and read it." My first thought was, I'm way farther out there than any alcoholic could be, so I don't see how that could help me. But I was willing to try anything. I started to read. I read that the guy in the book had a revelation he could stay sober by helping others to stay sober. And I thought, "I wonder if I could do the same thing with meth?" So I set out to try.

About thirty to sixty days later, I thought, Geez, being clean and sober sucks—why would I want to help anybody to get this way? Then I heard a

voice in my head that said, “Why don’t you try working all the Steps and then see what you think?” So I found a sponsor and started the Steps. Part of the deal was for me to admit powerlessness and, honestly, I struggled with that because I believed that “anything was possible.” I thought somehow, some way, I could control my meth use—the great obsession—I just hadn’t figured it out yet.

I looked back over the last twenty years of my life (I was about 30 at this time): all the lost opportunities, girlfriends, jobs, material possessions, and self-respect; the jail time and treatment centers; being broke, homeless, looked down on, beat up on, eaten up, insane, etc. A thought came to me. Is it worth it to keep believing “anything is possible”? How much more hell am I willing to go through? And I thought, No, it’s not worth it. Right there, I admitted being powerless, that meth was my master and I the servant. My life surely was unmanageable.

On Step Two, I was hung up. I believed that someday that I could evolve into a god, so I didn’t want to believe there was any power greater than that. I spoke with my sponsor and he said, “Okay...but is there a power that’s greater than what you are *right now*?” I’d seen evidence, so I had to admit, “Yeah, there is a power that is greater than what I am right now.” But before I could move forward, there was more to Step Two: “...restore us to sanity.” I figured I was perma-spun and might never come out of it, so I wasn’t sure if that power could or would restore my sanity. Someone said, “If you seek, you will find.” So, I sought for about a month or so and, in an amazing way, I found and was able to move forward.

I was afraid of Step Three because I thought about all the things I’d done and the way I had spoken out against God in the past. I thought, If I turn my will and my life over to him, he’ll have me right where he wants me and he’ll get me good. But I didn’t want to keep living the way I had been, so I took what I thought was a huge risk. Call it faith. I made a decision and, on my knees with my sponsor, offered my will and life to God.

With Step Four, I was honest and thorough. And Step Five—sharing stuff—well, that made me feel like half a man. I didn’t know what this guy was going to think of me, but he didn’t try to spit on me or kill me or anything of that sort. We talked for a very long time, and later that night

I meditated on Step Six for an hour. And then, from my knees, I asked God something like this: “God, I am now ready for you to have the good and bad. Remove from me all the character defects that might stand in the way of my usefulness to you and to others, and give me strength to do your work. Amen.”

On Step Eight, I added some places and people that weren't on my Fourth Step, and then I started Step Nine. I went to my family and expressed regret at the way I had treated them in the past and said, “If I can do anything for you, please let me know.” I began to make small financial amends. Shortly afterward, I started to make some decent money, but instead of going out of my way to make financial amends, I spent a lot of it on myself. I kind of skipped over Step Ten and went about meditating.

My sponsor said he thought I needed to go through the Steps again. I said, “Are you kidding? I'm waiting for my spiritual awakening. I'm not about to start over.” (Little did I know that I *would* be starting over after I relapsed about a week later.) I was resting on my laurels; I was ungrateful and angry at God. I thought I deserved anything I wanted and started to go to bars and clubs looking for sex. I was sleeping with women, treating them like objects and justifying it with “honesty,” being upfront about my motives. After only a couple of days relapsing, I was already traveling through time and communicating with everyone in code language. I was insane. But a miracle happened—and I got sober with a new sponsor and started the Steps again after only four days in void.

Once I woke up, I looked back on the almost two years I'd spent trying to do God's work, and I realized that is what I wanted. While I was still coming out of the meth fog, my girlfriend—who is now my wife—came to me and asked me if I would start a Crystal Meth Anonymous meeting. At first I resisted, and then about a month later, we started the first CMA meeting in Utah.

Today, I hold this fellowship very dear to me. I can share things people might not want to hear at other places, and people laugh and relate. I feel a lot of meth addicts have found a place we can call home. Today, my life is amazing. I've been through the Steps several times and am on my way

through them again. I've gone out of my way on Step Nine. I've been practicing Step Ten throughout the day and Ten and/or Eleven at night. I'm involved in service work and have been carrying the message. I've seen many miracles and have found a solution. It is a journey I pray you won't have to miss.

