

## **Hooked On Recovery**

January 16, 2009

*Black Ice Monday*

A couple Mondays ago, we had here in Connecticut one of those evenings of light rain and freezing temperatures that creates a treacherous glaze of barely visible ice. I woke that morning thinking Sandy had successfully begun her New Year's resolution by heading out pre-dawn to the gym. I heard the door close and then drifted back to sleep. When I came downstairs she was lying on the couch holding her arm and holding back tears. "What happened?" I asked with quiet alarm.

"The ice."

She took her first step off the front steps and ended on her back in an instant. Pow! She hit her head and landed on her wrist. Later she would write to the parents of the soccer team she manages "I also broke my wrist yesterday scoring a goal off a bicycle kick (or was it slipping on the ice?)" The woman has a sense of humor. At that moment however, she definitely didn't think it was too funny. Her left wrist and hand were more or less... mangled. I looked at it and looked at her and she seemed inordinately calm for the circumstance. Looking back, she may have been in a little shock. She assured me she was OK, that she didn't need to go to the ER, and that she would drive herself to the orthopedic. I kinda doubted what she was telling me but I have also learned when not to push.

"So now what?", I thought to myself. An old recovery slogan appeared on my brain's flat screen, "First Things First". Go take care of the ice before something, or someone else, gets broken. I gingerly, cautiously stepped out. This was the most slippery I have ever seen Henry Street. Glare ice ensconced everything. Our neighborhood was crystallized. I shuffled slowly to the garage, got the bucket of rock salt, and salted the steps and pathways. At least now we had a little traction.

The schools were delayed 90 minutes, so the next thing to do was get the two little ones to day-care up the street. Matthew was pretty cocky about the whole thing – no big deal. Mary was thrilled. This would be an excellent adventure. Stella, the little cockapoo, was clueless. Together, we stepped out onto the front porch and cautiously descended. Stella rocketed out to the end of the leash and lost her footing, legs pedaling madly. This sent Mary into hysterical giggles as she watched her puppy scrambling. Matthew stepped on the ice and landed on his butt.

As we made our trip up the street we negotiated the ice. It occurred to me that this icy sidewalk was a metaphor. The sidewalk represented the road of recovery and right now it was extremely slippery. Like recovery, I noticed we all handled it differently. Poor Sandy was blindsided, never saw it coming and paid for it with a broken wrist and several days of pain. Matty kept falling determined to figure it out on his own, but to his credit he never complained and ultimately made it. Old man Dad shuffled along cautiously, paid attention to every step, stayed the course and made it without any physical damage, but took a long time. Stella sailed out onto the ice, scrambled and slid, fell first on one side then the other, scraped her nose and slid on her butt. That little dog wore herself out but brought great delight to those watching.

And Mary, 4-year old precious Mary, completely enjoyed the journey laughing all the way with her hand securely held by her Father.

*Hooked on Recovery* is a biweekly message from CCAR Executive Director Phillip Valentine, person in recovery since 12/28/87, devoted husband, a father of five and just another surf fisherman. These thoughts, views and opinions reflect on his personal recovery and are not meant in any way to speak for the entire recovery community. He welcomes all your comments and suggestions on this column, email him at [phillip@ccar.us](mailto:phillip@ccar.us). Visit the website at [www.ccar.us](http://www.ccar.us) to read the entire series.