

Hooked On Recovery

October 1, 2004

I Am Not Ashamed!

I've had some stuff happen this past month. We all have had stuff happen. It just so happens that my stuff was a lot of good stuff. Some of it was quite emotional for me. I relate some of it, not to brag, or because my ego has decided to run rampant, but to illustrate some miracles of recovery. Believe me, my best thinking got me into a lot of trouble, so there **MUST** be a power greater than myself at work here.

Early in September, I met the Governor! For some it may not be a big deal, but it was a first for me. As I was driving to the appointment, I couldn't help but think about the power of recovery, the grace of God and how my life is now happy, joyous and free. The Promises do come true. With tremendous gratitude, nerves tingling and with my tongue sticking to the roof of my mouth, I shook her hand.

Then I had the chance to speak before a crowd in Bushnell Park on Sunday, September 19th at Recovery Walks!. I Realized as I was preparing that I was no longer ashamed. This is what I said...

Hi everyone. It's great to see all of you here today! My name is Phillip Valentine; by the grace of God I've been in recovery since December 28, 1987. And that is the most important thing I'll say today. I have the privilege of serving you as the Executive Director of CCAR. I consider myself a trusted servant of yours, the recovery community.

I stand before you with my family, a miracle of recovery, to welcome all of you to Bushnell Park and thank you for being a part of a growing vanguard willing to put a face on recovery and carry a message of hope to those still sick and suffering. Thank you.

As I stand before you I can not help but reflect on where I've come from...

- There once was a time when I believed a drink or a drug was the answer to all my troubles.
- There once was a time when I blamed everyone else for the misery of my own making.
- There once was a time when my battle cry against the disease of addiction was 'I'll quit tomorrow!'
- There once was a time when I was ashamed to face my family and friends, ashamed of what had become of my life, ashamed of my disease, ashamed of my behavior, ashamed of how I treated the people who loved me...
- There once was a time almost 17 years ago that while drowning in a sea of sickness and shame that I reached desperately for a flimsy reed that turned out to be the loving and powerful hand of God...
- So, today, I am not ashamed.
- Today, I am not ashamed of who I am.
- Today, I am not ashamed to stand before my family and say I love you.
- Today, I am not ashamed of my recovery or of my health condition.

- Today, I am not ashamed of my behavior.
- Today, I am not ashamed of the recovery community that saved me.
- Today, I am not ashamed to stand before you and declare my recovery.
- Today, I am not ashamed to share the message of hope that recovery brings.
- Today, I am not ashamed of my God who delivered me.

I am not ashamed. I am not ashamed. I am not ashamed.

May you walk not ashamed today. May you walk humbly, yet full of pride in support of recovery.

Thank you.

Hooked on Recovery is a biweekly message from CCAR Executive Director Phillip Valentine, person in recovery since 12/28/87, devoted husband, father of four (expecting number five) and just another surf fisherman. He welcomes all your comments and suggestions on this column, email him at phillip@ccar.us. Or visit the website at www.ccar.us to read previous articles.