



# Miracles do happen



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## walking this talk

by Earnie Larsen, national author/lecturer



Bill W. in *As Bill Sees It* states, "A new life ... is sobriety all that we are to expect of a spiritual awakening? No, sobriety is only a bare beginning; it is only the first gift of the first awakening ..."

personality. What we once were we no longer are. How we once thought, acted and reacted is not how we live our life today. Not perfectly. None of us will ever be perfect. But we can be more than we were before.

Is sobriety all that we are to expect of a spiritual awakening? No, sobriety is only a bare beginning; it is only the first gift of the first awakening. If more gifts are to be received, our awakening has to go on. As it does go on, we find that bit by bit we can discard the old life—the one that did not work—for a new life that can and does work under any conditions. —Quoted from *As Bill Sees It*, pg. 8

The Founders clearly understood sobriety as the first step of a process. That process was intended to take us all the way to a life of the Promises. Recovery is nothing less than a true transformation of our

I've always found recovery best explained and best understood in the lives led by those in the Fellowship. Anyone can say anything. The truth is in how we live. As a fellow said in a meeting I attended recently on

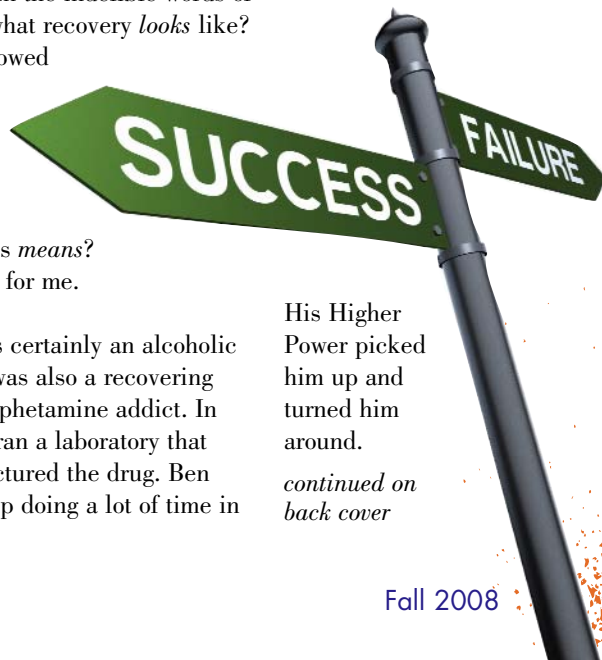
the 11th step, "I shouldn't say a prayer if I am not willing to be a prayer." The truth of what we believe is in how we live.

Where have you *seen* recovery recently? Who has spelled out for you in the indelible words of action what recovery *looks* like? Who showed you what living the life of the Promises *means*? Ben did for me.

Ben was certainly an alcoholic but he was also a recovering methamphetamine addict. In fact he ran a laboratory that manufactured the drug. Ben ended up doing a lot of time in

prison for his lifestyle. He was a big time addict and felon who cared about no one but himself and what he could get from others. But then recovery hit. He was granted the miracle of seeing a better way and taking it.

His Higher Power picked him up and turned him around.  
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# on the journey with gratitude

by Betty Baker, Rosecrance Alumni Coordinator



*Dear Recovering Travelers,*

Alumni, family and friends, I welcome you to the Rosecrance *Miracles Do Happen* Newsletter!

Recovery is a lifelong journey and along this path, we all need guides, navigators and other recovering kin who can provide support and direction. It is my hope that *Miracles Do Happen* will be a guide that will encourage, motivate, inform and provide a creative outlet for you on your journey.

*Miracles Do Happen* is just one way that Rosecrance Alumni Services can assist you. We offer support by:

- Connecting you with other recovering alumni through support groups and fun, sober events.
- Providing an Alumni Page on our website, [www.rosecrance.org](http://www.rosecrance.org), with information on events and helpful links. A message board is coming soon.
- Developing programs and events to meet your needs from your input given through our Alumni Survey. (Please download a survey from our website if you haven't completed one.)

- Hosting an Annual Alumni/Family/Friends Picnic. This year's picnic will be held Sunday, September 14 at Alpine Park in Rockford. (Last year we had over 250 people attend.)

It is our hope to have a large network of recovering alumni reaching out in service to others who are making the transition from treatment to home to lifelong recovery. There are many ways that you can be a part of this support:

- Join our Speakers' Bureau and pass on your experience, strength and hope of recovery.
- Serve on our Alumni Advisory Board to help plan events.
- Submit your recovery story, artwork or poems to *Miracles Do Happen*.

I appreciate so many of you who made this newsletter possible. Thanks to Alumni Amy, Taryn and Lindsey for their willingness to share their experiences in their miracle stories. I appreciate Earnie Larsen for his generous and kind heart when he offered to write for our newsletter.

Lastly, I appreciate all the recovery travelers I have met in my life whether it was from the 12 step programs or through the doors of Rosecrance. We are all students in this life and I am grateful for the gifts you have given in service to others.

In essence, our journey of recovery is a journey of gratitude. Albert Schweitzer says it best: *Gratitude means to take nothing for granted, but to always seek out and value the kind that will stand behind the action. Nothing that is done for you is a matter of course. Everything originates in a will for the good, which is directed at you. Train yourself never to put off the word or action for the expression of gratitude.*

It is with gratitude that I am honored to be on this journey with you.

With Gratitude,



Betty Baker  
Rosecrance Alumni Coordinator

# freedom to grow

the fellowship of Taryn and Amy

When 18 year old Taryn went on her first weekend home pass from one of the Rosecrance recovery homes, there was a helping hand in place to connect her with the 12 step community. Rosecrance alumna Amy offered Taryn support, welcomed her into the 12 step community and introduced her to other young people serious about their recovery.

Taryn remarked, “I hung out with her on every home pass I had. It is really helpful ... building a network of people in recovery. A lot of people end up going back to their old friends or old boyfriends and then relapse. A support network lowers the risk of returning to old using friends out of old habits and familiarity or isolation and loneliness.”

Amy introduced Taryn to the other winners in 12 step recovery in her home community near Chicago. “It really helped not to be thrown into this sea of people without knowing any-

one. By introducing me to people who were working the program, it definitely made it easier. I doubt if things would have gone as smoothly without this connection,” shares Taryn.

One of Taryn’s home passes was over the 4th of July. Holidays can be a real threat to recovery. Memories of past partying, loneliness or reuniting with old using friends can lead to relapse.

“I didn’t know what I was going to do on the 4th of July, then Amy invited me over,” says Taryn. “We had fun with other recovering friends—laughing and enjoying fellowship and fireworks.”

This 4th of July meant so much more to Taryn—she celebrated her freedom to grow in recovery through her circle of fellowship and service to others.

Miracles can and do happen. What a gift this program is for those who walk it.

## navigating the journey in college

Alumnae Lindsey, who recently completed two years of coursework at a junior college, knows the importance of having a support system at college. With three years in recovery, Lindsey left her familiar home group and strong recovery community to attend a Wisconsin university to complete her degree.

“With the party atmosphere of most college campuses, it is a real challenge to navigate your recovery path,” says Lindsey. “You really need to make sure you build your recovery support system.” In Lindsey’s situation, there were no 12 step meetings on campus.

“At first I felt a little left out because I didn’t go to parties,” says Lindsey. “When asked to go to parties, I would say ‘I can’t handle just one.’ For the most part people understood.”

“Negotiating college life can be a challenge for anyone, which is why I recommend building support systems from many different places,” says Susan Rice, MS Ed., eight year higher education specialist and Rosecrance’s Director of Public Relations. “Talk to your college residence hall director about the fact that you are in recovery. Make your goals about living a substance free life understood and ask for help in building a support system of peers.”

Residence directors and other student life staff have access to

resources that you may not be aware of on your own. In addition, many colleges will incorporate lifestyle floors into their residence halls if there is enough interest. “I have worked in residence halls where floors were designated according to shared interests in international affairs, music, or quiet lifestyle,” explains Rice. “A recovery or substance-free lifestyle floor would not be out of the question.”

There is a benefit to having a professional person on campus who often lives in the same building with you know your story. “When a time arises that you find yourself struggling, it helps to know a professional who is aware of your concerns and background without having to go through it when you’re already feeling overwhelmed.”

The important thing to remember is build your alliances early. Lindsey offers the following advice for those going away to college:

- Seek out and create a support system in recovery
- Get a new sponsor as close by as possible
- Make time for meetings
- Get involved in service work in the 12 step fellowship
- Attend sober events and meetings when you return home during breaks



## walking this talk *from cover*

I was sitting next to Ben at our meeting two weeks ago. He told me he had to take a bus back to the city where he was sentenced to take care of some “legal stuff.” His trip would take three days—a day to get there, a day to take care of his legal responsibilities and a third day getting home. I asked him if he had any money. Without a second’s hesitation he reached back for his wallet and said, “Sure, what do you need?”

I told him I didn’t want his money. I was asking if he had any money for his trip? Did he have enough to get a cup of coffee or a sandwich? He answered, “Sure, I got ten dollars.”

And there was the miracle of recovery showing its face better than a million words could ever tell. From a self-centered, addicted felon who cared about nothing and no one but himself to a man instantly willing to

share the only ten dollars he had for his trip.

I think that’s what Bill W. had in mind when he said sobriety was only the bare beginning. He was talking about Ben and the kind of life the Founders had in mind for all of us. ■

*Earnie is a recovery warrior who has spoken all over the world and written many books about the journey of recovery. This nationally known author and lecturer is the originator of the process known as Stage II Recovery, which deals with resolving life issues and old systems. Earnie has authored more than 60 books and 40 motivational self-help tapes.*

**To learn more about Earnie Larsen, visit his website at [www.earnie.com](http://www.earnie.com)**

## alumni/ recovery events

Following are sober events/conferences offered around the region. *Please Note: these are not sponsored by or affiliated with Rosecrance.*

2008 Midwest Woman to Woman Seminar  
October 3 - 5, 2008, St. Louis, MO

Northern IL Area 20 15th Annual  
Big Book Conference  
November 1, 2008, Manteno, IL

Men’s Retreat  
February 6 -8, 2009, McHenry, IL

Heart to Heart, Women’s Retreat  
February 13 -15, 2009, Walworth, WI

Visit [www.rosecrance.org/alumni.htm](http://www.rosecrance.org/alumni.htm)  
for registration sheets and  
up-to-date information.



## on the lighter side

“Always laugh when you can. It is cheap medicine.” —Lord Byron

“If I were given the opportunity to present a gift to the next generation, it would be the ability for each individual to learn to laugh at himself.” —Charles M. Schultz

“Laughter is inner jogging.”  
—Norman Cousins

## food for thought

### stages of recovery and relapse warning signs

Terrence Gorski, internationally recognized expert on substance abuse, describes relapse as a process that happens differently at different stages of a person’s recovery. In order to understand relapse, it is important to identify what stage of recovery the addict is in.

Following are the six different stages of recovery with corresponding relapse warning signs for each:

#### Stage 0 of recovery - active addiction

May be an enforced abstinence such as in jail or in treatment  
*Relapse warning sign: none*

#### Stage 1 of recovery - transition

Recognizes addiction and its problems, accepts help and starts recovery—treatment  
*Relapse warning sign: return of denial and resistance*

#### Stage 2 of recovery - stabilization

Begins medical stabilization, crisis management and recovery program  
*Relapse warning sign: return of problems with normal functioning*

#### Stage 3 of recovery - early recovery (internal changes)

Change in addictive thoughts, feelings and behaviors  
*Relapse warning sign: return of thinking, feeling and behavior problems*

#### Stage 4 of recovery - middle recovery (external change)

Establishes sober and balanced lifestyle  
*Relapse warning sign: return of self-defeating lifestyle patterns, such as unresolved issues, build up of stress and pain*

#### Stage 5 of recovery - late recovery (growth and development)

Focuses on overcoming obstacles to healthy living that may have been learned in childhood  
*Relapse warning sign: over-confidence and complacency, such as stop personal growth, inability to cope or ask for help*

#### Stage 6 of recovery - maintenance (ongoing personal support)

Recognizes that we can never safely use alcohol and other drugs, and we must practice a daily recovery program  
*Relapse warning sign: Any of the signs from stages one through five*

