

REFRAMING SADNESS

**A challenging, amusing and dramatic family interaction to do the impossible ...
to find joy in life ... so that a sad past ... can gently be allowed to fade away**

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Act 1 – The Past

Act 2 – The Mix of Past and Present

Act 3 – Planning for the Future

Players in order of appearance:

Arch – Polish, 80 years, humorous, busy, ambitious, successful, politician, father of George and Henry

Eliza – English, 75, aristocratic, rich, caring, gentle, confused, mother of George

Dr Xavier – French, 30, medical doctor, psychiatrist, gentle, creative

George - English, 50, intelligent, creative, tired, alcoholic, depressed, husband of Miche

Miche – Italian, 45, caring, dynamic, active, manager, wife of George

Alfred – English, 25, intelligent, ambitious, restrained, son of George

Bedelia – French, 24, strong, caring, girlfriend of Alfred

AA Sponsor – speaker, gentle adviser, dignified, kindly, humble

Patrick – AA member, raspy, nicotine voiced, recovering, old, humble

Dr Silkworth – Medical doctor. AA Founder

**Note: The play is designed as intriguing and dramatic fiction.
All discussions are imaginary and highly exaggerated by the players.
Some ideas and values may be worthy of consideration.**

ACT 1 – THE PAST

SCENE 1 – ORIGINAL SCENE - ARCH (A) AND ELIZA (E) IN THE LOUNGE OF THEIR LUXURIOUS LONDON HOME

A – We are so lucky to be still here together after our lifetime adventures.

E – Yes Arch. And still in love as deeply as ever.

A – In spite of my bad habits?

E – Perhaps because of them. They give me something to complain about, but I still love you.

A – Thank you Eliza. You are a terrible complainer, and I love you too. But I am a bit worried about our son.

E – Henry is fine.

A – No not Henry dear. George. I think he is seriously depressed again and giving everyone a hard time. Not his fault. He does his best but the past haunts him. I wonder what he really feels like ...

SCENE 2 - GEORGE ALONE

G – I feel alone. A tortured self. Tortured in a way that I cannot escape. All my loved ones are powerless to release me from this torture.

It's almost like feeling "being possessed by demons!!! The sun may be shining. I am surrounded by love. But I am in hell and cannot escape!!!

The doctors in white coats jump in and say "let us relieve George of his pain and distress" ...

But the effect of their efforts and medications is just to relieve my symptoms, but not to touch deep "hard wiring" cause of those symptoms in the first place. There is a fixed "hard-wiring" deep ... in my spirit ... that will not change.

So I need help. Can't do it alone. Pain and distress seem to be a necessary part of the cure. Education and so-called intelligence seem to be a handicap. Got to find a way. Got to change ... got to re-configure this "hard-wiring" in my mind ... somehow ...!!!

SCENE 3 – ORIGINAL SCENE

E – What can we do ... we are so old ...

A – But his depression now goes back to his difficult childhood of years ago

E – He had a wonderful luxurious childhood dear! Why should you think anything different?”

A – Well you remember those Nannies, who gave him problems?

E – Yes I had to fire them when they became too difficult. The first one looked after George for three years from the time you and I left for Switzerland. George was about 9 months old at the time.

A – And I was ill in Switzerland with TB. I always remember the TB Nurse.

E – Really? What happened?

A – I felt terrible so I said: “Nurse, I feel terrible!!! I think I’m going to die!

E – How did she reply?

A - She said: “Well, we’ve all got to go sometime. Have to get on with it!!!”

S – So?

A – So ... I was so annoyed!!! I resolved to get better!!! And I did!!!

E – Some memories we forget ...and others we remember forever!!!

| A – So what happened with Nannie No; 1?

HUGE VIDEO IMAGE OF NANNIE NO. 1 (MASK)

E - She was a bit sexy with George;

A – Alas not with me ...

E – Shame!!! But I didn’t want to you to be exposed to the worry;

A – Thank you;

E - And I didn’t want George to be exposed to your TB.

A – And?

E – Well a new UK Nannie No; 2 was appointed. George grew up. He became a bit serious, and then he finally arrived, back with us in Switzerland! But then in Suisse it may have happened again.

HUGE VIDEO IMAGE OF NANNIE NO. 2 (MASK)

A – Yes, we had lovely Maria, the Austrian girl. I remember she became very close to us all. . She used to take George out alone a lot into the countryside when we were busy;

E – And then there was that No; 3 French Mademoiselle

HUGE VIDEO IMAGE OF NANNIE NO.3 (MASK)

– a bit of a martinet – she was the one who I think used to come into George’s room at night? My problem was I couldn’t get her to leave, even after I fired her! Oh well, everything eventually settled down!!

A – Settled down!! Who would imagine that Nannies were a critical home security risk for family ... while I was so busy in international security politics?

E – No, not for you dear. But, I finally decided it was probably a good thing that George had sex with an older woman ...

A – Well I prefer younger ones ...

E – Yes, dear, when you were up to it ... all those years ago

A – But for George, wasn’t it a bit too early – he must have only have been about 13 by that time?

E – Well, sex was a family problem that George grew up with. His younger brother Henry developed normally, but George became a broody.

A – Yes, and in his teens, I seem to remember he began to suffer some bouts of depression. Perhaps because we make too much of a fuss about it. I seem to remember that in the old days, in Poland and Ireland things were different!!!

E – Different?

A – When the old father misbehaved with the daughter in the family ... it was never discussed ... and the wife was sometimes quite relieved ... it was accepted as part of the culture ..; so nothing to worry about; just put up with papa ... such a pain!!!

E – I don't believe your old Polish stories Arch!! And anyway back to George. His school-work changed from being first-rate, to average. So it did him no good! His school reports kept mentioning ... "an attitude problem".

A – Are we responsible for all this? I recall how he surprised us both by bringing home a sexy Greek countess 30 years his senior – almost a contemporary of mine!!! Too old for me!!!

HUGE VIDEO IMAGE OF THE OLD GREEK COUNTESS

E – George has a strange personality!!!

A – Like his father!!! Guilty ...!!!

E – And what amazed me ... this Greek relationship went on and on ... right through George's time at University. It was only many years later when did George develop lasting relationships with women of his own age. His childhood experiences had trained him specifically to relate sexually to older women.

A – Oh dear!!! Quite the opposite of his father!!!

E – Well, we were trying to forget that, dear. Anyway, I told him he was very fortunate to have those early experiences; that they somehow distinguished him from other young men of his age. So he felt quite superior to his contemporaries.

A – Yes and but now he is 50 years old in depression. Married, like me, three times and has one lovely son, whereas I have two ... well two legitimate ones! Reminds me of an old friend of mine in Poland.

E – Another old Polish tale ...

A – Yes, he had a special lunch, for his five children and five other strange young people. He deliberately arrived very late ... everyone had a great lunch ... and got along so well ... and at the end ... he announced with the best champagne that he had a confession to make ... and that ... surprise ... surprise? ... they were all this children ... and he loved them all

E – When is your special lunch Arch. I shall come too ... with a gun!!!

A – Not this year dear.

E – Well back to George. Unlike you with your humour, George was not always on top ... but he did have a fantastic successful business career ... despite recurrent breakdowns, roughly every 10 years. Sad diagnoses ... manic-depressive, bi-polar, and prone to psychotic episodes and even one suicide attempt.

A – Yes, like me he has his ups and downs.

E – Yes, do you remember when you refused to work, so I kicked you out?

A – Yes, dear, so I got a job, started a business and made a fortune. And you took me back in again. Thank you;

E Your welcome!

A – Well, George seemed to be OK until now, with 800mg of lithium carbonate, a mood stabilizer daily, and a consultant psychiatrist. So no further suicide attempts. Personally I prefer gin and tonic;

E – Arch my love, I have asked the psychiatrist Dr Xavier to come to make a visit, and he should be here soon.

A – Just time for a cup of tea first please, for my morale ... because I do feel responsible even after all these yearsI didn't do enough for George. And it is on my conscience ...

E – Right dear. Tea coming up ...

BELL RINGS

E – So here is the soothing tea ... and that must be the Doctor.

ENTER DR. XAVIER

D – Good morning Eliza and Arch. So pleased to see you again about your son George. You know all about his case ... almost better than me ... so I can speak frankly with you ... to share my ideas for helping him ...

A – Yes, indeed ...

D – I can speak confidentially ...

A – And frankly please ...

D – Yes, frankly ... so ... now ... I had two hours with George yesterday!!! I am up to the minute with his problems. Now, what shall we discuss first ...?

E – You are so welcome, Dr. Xavier. How kind of you to come. Georges is so sick again with his depressions ... we need your help ... we must understand ...

A – We must do something...

D – Of course. Let's go over the background again, on George.

A – Please. Because I feel responsible ... even after all these years ...

D – You know it all so well. George is a very complex case. Perhaps he wants to “withdraw” from any dependency that has been “hard-wired” into his brain in infancy? George’s early experiences have left him confused - in more ways than one.

A – Yes. He is confused?

E - Confused about whom to trust in life?

D – And you know, he is confused, even by his own identity. Perhaps, because in good faith ... you are his loving parents ... pronounced his early sad sexual experiences ... with older women ... to be “a good thing”. Alas, it wasn’t!!! I’m afraid you were a bit wrong ... sorry!

A – Perhaps those older women were very skillful at love making ... with their long experience? Only up to 65 of course ...

E – Arch. Please be serious!!!

A – Yes, dear. Sorry! But we have to laugh at life, if we want to change!

D – Maybe you are right. But seriously, I believe that you tried your best to give him a solid foundation again, based on your limited understanding.

E – We did the best we could to sooth him as a child;

D – And now you know that George is 50 years old ... with serious problems ... but he is very intelligent and in recent years, he researches a bit too well ... on the effect of childhood sexual abuse. He knows that his own history of chronic depression and recurrent breakdown could relate to it. It is not unusual among victims of childhood sexual abuse, to have, emotional and psychiatric disturbance in later and later life ... getting locked in to bad memories

E – So many years later? So were we wrong so suggest that his early experiences with older women could prove be beneficial ... in the long run.

A – We were wrong ...and naïve!!!

D – Yes, and George finally realized that the older women who seduced him, were not the “good news” he needed ... but “abuse”.

A – Abuse indeed. Why did we not realize that? How could we be so naïve!! Which such a marriage history ...!

D – Yes, and you know his marriage history as well as I do!! George had a first marriage and a lovely son Alfred, but his wife left him. So his second marriage into a religious American tribe, in his 40s, proved to be abusive. The second wife was eventually arrested for assault on him!!!

His third wife Miche, is lovely, but so stressed. And finally George, with his earlier experiences and marriages, has concluded, that in this world ... no one can be trusted anymore; So here we are today with another depressive crisis! No trust?

E – Not even his wife? I wonder how she feels.

D – Yes, his wife Miche must be having a hard time ...

SCENE 4 - MICHE ALONE

I am finding it too hard to put up with George for much longer!!!

He is confused by his mental condition and even with his treatment. Yesterday, he told me he was better. He understood the need to apologize to people he offended. He just wanted to be liked. But you see, in fact ... he is liked and admired by so many people.

He said to me, that I must understand him ... as someone who loathed himself, but needed to be liked. He believes his suicidal tendencies are all due to childhood molestation. I tried to explain that they were a side-effect of depression. But, it didn't fit his ideas ... so he then got upset... and left the room.

It is clear to me that he is in denial ... denial about his mental condition. He blames it all on child molestation, when the main issue is depression. And yet so confusing for me ... he is intelligent and can carry on normal phone conversations, even though he sometimes becomes completely ... totally irrational.

I love him so much, but I am just finding it too hard ... to put up with George for much longer!!!

SCENE 5 – ORIGINAL SCENE

A – But Miche is a very strong tough character too.

E – Yes, she has been so good for him for over eight years.

D – Yes. And George is such a clever fellow ... he has researched so well ... he even discovered that even some crazy mothers, sexually abuse their children.

E – Not me, please!!!

A – Well ... if you research long enough on the web ... you can find anything you want to find...true or false ...and it is so hard to know the difference ...!!

E- Yes, but it's so hard to believe!!! A world where no one can be trusted. Oh so sad!!!

D – Yes, so he decided to try to control everything and everyone ... himself, and thus to make his life predictable with no surprises!!! A child-like mix of victims and abusers, repeating the same abusive relationships. But now at 50, he may at last have decided ... and he is deep into AA Alcoholics Anonymous. But I have my doubts about AA; like the case of Mrs. Miller.

SCENE 6 – MRS CRAIG

I can give you an opinion on when I was an alcoholic, or shall we say I still am but I haven't had any form of alcohol for over 8 years and can't even sit next to anyone with a drink as the smell sickens me....

However, when I was drinking a lot, at one time for 6 straight weeks and then I wouldn't touch it for another 6 - 8 weeks, It's an addiction which is extremely difficult to kick but I only did it when I was unhappy.

I tried everything even going 6 times 6 days running to AA, but all the people there came smelling of drink and were all smoking and I had given smoking up some years previously. So went out feeling sick with the smell of smoke and dirty people, and I popped into the bar next door and had a brandy and port! It stopped me feeling sick.

I found quite a lot of quite upper class people, a school master of a public school, as in private, a GP and a Catholic priest who came to the 6 meetings; The priest said, one third of us are alcoholics, one third like little boys and one third are OK.

But I found, that it wasn't for me and I sadly didn't give it up at that stage, but it shook me so badly when my new doctor took me off Lorazepam medications cold turkey, when I had been on them for 23 years and was thoroughly addicted to them. My only outlet was to have a drink. I had a bottle a day for over a week and landed up in hospital for three months and never touched it again, as I nearly died.

My doctor was thoroughly ticked off for stopping my Lorazepam, so I was put back on them, so I never drank again.

If you can give up cigarettes, you can give up alcohol and its only unhappiness that makes you drink too much.

My husband got the sack at 52 for being in a pub when he was supposed to be off sick with 'flu. He stayed at home and drank a double at 07.00 in the morning, and on and on it went until he was on one and a half bottles of scotch a day, hence it killed him.

I didn't drink for ages, but I came from a drinky family. My mother opened a bottle of red wine to share between the three of us, and she would polish the lot off before we got a look in. Hence it may be inherited. My grandfather had double brandies for breakfast! He died at 61 of pneumonia before I was born.

So AA doesn't help everyone and I didn't find being with other alcoholics any help whatsoever, mostly due to the cigarette smoke and I felt dirty when I got home.

The 12 AA steps may help with depression but I prefer gardening.

Alcoholism is an illness but you can get over it like I did but the trouble was, spirits were poison to me which helped. As a matter of fact, I wished I had never had a drink in my life but too late for that now.

SCENE 7 – ORIGINAL SCENE

D – So I am against AA for George. I have too many doubts, like the case of Mrs.; Miller.

E – Against?

D – Yes against ... that enough is enough ... George has had enough of AA!!! Hence the present problem ... breakdown ... do you begin to understand now?

A – Well enough for now ... your news is too strong for my old mind and body ... thank you doctor ... to think ... I must have a break ... I don't want to be remembered as an old dumbo!!!

E – No dear, we'll try to do our best to have a good memory of you ... Thank you Doctor. We will call you ... when we really begin understand ... a bit better ... and then can all decide what to do ... for the best ...

A – Oh dear!!! How could we be so dumb?

E – Good thought ... I'll get you a gin and tonic, dear ...

D – So bye for now. I am always available to help you with this complex situation ... I too am very involved and feel personally determined ... to find a way ... for George ... and all of us ... to resolve it ... so bye for now ...

DOCTOR LEAVES – END OF ACT 1

ACT 2 – THE MIX OF PAST AND PRESENT

SCENE 1 – ORIGINAL SCENE - GEORGE (G) AND MICHE (M) AT HOME IN A SMALL ROUGH ROOM – GEORGE’S OFFICE

M – How are you feeling now in your office, George?

G – Very hard to say, Miche. Not your fault, but everything annoys me. My past is getting into every moment of my present ... every day!!

M – And ... I am here to listen. I love you dearly and want us to be happy again. We have done such great things for eight years together. George ... please talk to me ... and I will try to understand ...

G – Miche my dear. It is not your fault. It is mine and the past ... which will not leave me alone. But OK ... let me try to explain ...

M – You have my total mind-body attention!

G - Well for a start, can you imagine my nightmares and daymares; with extreme physical and emotional pain, all invisible to the outsider; my psychosis - difficulty distinguishing reality and fantasy ... and my crazy path of suicide attempts.

M – Yes ...I am trying so hard I want to understand you. It will do us both good... because ...

MICHE SPEAKING VERY EMOTIONALLY

You have so suddenly become incredibly annoying ...!!!!!!!!!!!!!! ... with me ...!!! ... and you have even moved out of our bedroom ...!!! ... to sleep in your office ... and only talk to your ex- alcoholic friends ... almost all day long ... what am I to do with you?

MICHE SPEAKING VERY GENTLY

And yet ... no word of comfort ... for me ... so please ... please George ... please go on, George ... and I will try so hard to understand at last ... !!

G – Well, I am so sorry my dear Miche ... so sorry...!!! So sorry...!!! ... it is my entire fault ... not yours ... not yours at all ... but you see ... I am not an alcoholic but all my alcoholic past with the AA ... is my present refuge. I think of it all the time!!!

M – Your past can also be in your present. I begin to understand!! Will you help me to understand, dear George?

G – I will do my best. I think it is a sex problem!!! In the distant past!! For example. Something sexual happened when I was aged only 9 months old!!!

M – So young, when you needed your mother. How could you remember?

G – I believe I was in the care of my first of many Nannies.

M – You believe it ... but you can't possibly know ...

G – Agreed! But then they must have looked after me, instead of my mother, who was always busy caring for my sick TB father!! By the time I was reunited with my parents at four years old, in Switzerland, my heart had shut down.

M – Shut down?

G – Yes!!! My very first memory is: “How can I be so good, so that people won't think that I am bad?” But I was always sad!!! Because, for me ... Nannies were a very sexy... but I came to like it ... and felt so bad!! oh dear!!! ...and even ask for it ... some even said no, and told my mother!!! ... oh dear!!!

M – How could you be bad at only 4 years of age?

G – Well I had a sexual sadness, and I used to treat it, by playing with my mother's clothing, daydreaming and over-eating. I was desperate to be loved by my mother. But I was always looked after by Nannies, not my mother!

SCENE 2 – NANNIE NO. 1 (MASK)

Nannie –

I loved George so much ...

PAUSE

I wanted to please him in every way I could ...

PAUSE

I played with him ... and he loved it ...

PAUSE

So I didn't think I was doing him any harm ... just having fun together ...

PAUSE

SCENE 3 - ORIGINAL SCENE

M – You missed her so much.

G – Yes, but I loved all my Nannies!!! ... I remember no. 2 - Maria, I still remember with a thrill. She was big-busted, with jet-black hair, and very red lips. At age 7 I spent so much time playing with her in long grass

SCENE 4 – NANNIE NO.2 (MASK)

Nannie –

George kept encouraging me ... to spend so much time playing sexually ... always in the long grass ... somewhere in the countryside. South of London... I loved it too

SCENE 5 – ORIGINAL SCENE

G - . Now every time I see a big-breasted woman or a field of long grass, her memory comes ... female and sexual kissing.

M – Oh dear. It's a horrid thought, but I am glad you can at last get it out....!!!

G – And one Nannie was a French Mademoiselle, when I was 11 years old.

SCENE 6 – NANNIE NO. 3 HEAVY FRENCH ACCENT (MASK)

Nannie –

I fell hopelessly in love with little George.

So I could not stop myself making nightly visits to his bedroom.

He could hear me turn the key in the lock of his bedroom door behind me ...

I was a bit naughty ... I stayed too long ... but I meant him no harm ...

SCENE 7 - ORIGINAL SCENE

G - She was so loving ... would first kneel by the bed and fondle me, and eventually get into bed with me.

M – So you were abused and had no choice! But ... I have to laugh ... you learned to enjoy it ...

G – Well to be frank with you. I did enjoy it!!! But now I am ashamed!!! Those earlier sexual experiences led me to consider myself superior and grown-up. Sessions with the French model only came to an end because she insisted I keep her visits a secret. They lasted for months. So strange. I did not want to keep them a secret! So eventually I told my parents and she was fired on the spot. But her memory is with me now!!!

M – I guess, your parents made a mistake, trying to calm you down, by telling you that these episodes amounted to “a good thing”.

G – Absolutely yes!!! So, in later life I tended to demonstrate to myself (and to my parents) that I could satisfy any woman I wanted. Yes, whether she was of my own age or not. I once had a Greek countess, old enough to be my mother.

HUGE VIDEO IMAGE OF OLD GREEK COUNTESS LOOKING AMUSED (MASK)

M - That is really a bit too much!!! I have to laugh ... So what happened next? I have to laugh again ... is the countess still locked into your brain, as an obsession?

G – Well at age 21, I came into an inheritance and was assured of a larger income than I could possibly have needed or spent! Love is a great motivator ... but alas ... money is an even greater motivator ...

HUGE VIDEO IMAGE OF CASH

M – And so many of us will do almost anything for cash a huge amount of cash ... even me ... oh dear ... I hope not ...

G - I agree. Cash is so powerful. And this meant that I could impress women with money as well as my sexual appetite. I also had a great job in business that impressed people. I was an eminent human resource consultant!!! In spite of enormous feelings of inadequacy, I managed to overcome the worst and had “arrived”. I had regular sex, power and money and these more than compensated me ... for my inner shortcomings.

RING AND SUDDEN APPEARANCE OF THE SON ALFRED (AL) AND HIS GIRLFRIEND BEDELIA (B)

G – Hello my dear son Alfred, and his love Bedelia. How lovely see you. What’s up? Got a problem?

AL – Well not really. We heard you were not feeling too well, so we just stopped by to see if we could help...

M – Lovely to see you looking so well, Bedelia. How are you?

B – Well actually Miche, I have a little problem; could I speak with you alone for a moment, please?

M – For female advice. I am the expert ... now gentlemen ... could you two heroes ... go into the garden for a pee ... for a five minutes, please ... George and Alfred?

G – At your command chief!!! Women rule the world!!

GEORGE AND ALFRED LEAVE

B – Thank you, I am so worried.

M – Oh dear; Let me guess? You're pregnant?

B – Oh dear, how did you know?

M – Body language. That expression on your face as you came in.

B – So what to do? Abortion, have it alone as a single mum, or marriage? And I hear that in this family, marriage is becoming a terrible trial for you dear, Miche.

M – Yes, and this little talk will take more than five minutes ... probably a lifetime ... in marriage we plan for a lifetime together ... we think we know someone ... but it may take twenty years ... for the real personality to fully reveal itself ... oh dear ... so when we fall in love in life we have to take a chance ... and we have to take it... or life will be so boring!!!

B – Boring? Oh dear!! I never thought of that!!! ... Well it is not boring ... at this moment!!! My initial reaction is abortion! I think single mothers can't give a child what he needs. But marriage is such risk!!!

M – Yes dear. There are always seven alternatives for every problem. So why don't we meet this afternoon at 4 o'clock for tea at the nice restaurant near the station?

B – OK. But at the moment it seems to me that ... I love Alfred so much ... but marriage in his family has too many problems ... so abortion will have to be the answer ...

M - Wait a moment... let's talk this afternoon ... OK?

CALLS BACK THE MEN. ENTER GEORGE AND ALFRED

G – I was just explaining to Alfred, that women rule the world, so we men have to protect ourselves from abuse ...

B – Well ... I don't buy that, but we have to go now ...

A – I obey ...

M – So see you this afternoon 4 o'clock at the restaurant near the station, for a quiet chat. OK?

B – OK. Bye.

EXIT ALFRED AND BELINDA

G – Well ... I am curious ... what is the problem with Bedelia?

M – The old one ... that gets resolved so badly in this family ...

G – Marriage?

M - You got it right on the ball! She’s pregnant and would love to marry ... but is terrified ... will probably abort ...

G – Oh how sad. I would love to have grandchildren ... what can we do ...?

M – Nothing. It is none of our business!! But I will see her this afternoon to try to help.

G – Well I only usually help people ... to help myself.

M - So you have a lot to learn dear George. Now, on with your story please. I am beginning to understand you at last.

G - Well as I was saying ... at age 21, I came into an inheritance and had too much cash ...

M – You were ruined by cash!!!

G – Yes, I could impress women with money and my job – consultant in human resources!

M - But perhaps there were warning signs that all was not well?

G – Yes. You are really beginning to understand me !! It was so strange in the old days. My Greek Countess preferred to hide me, in the cupboard, when her family came, she smuggled me into her house at night.

HUGE VIDEO IMAGE OF THE GREEK COUNTESS HIDING GEORGE IN THE CUPBOARD (MASKS)

G - This warned me that something must definitely be wrong with me!!! Yes, and some years ago, at an international self-development conference I received feedback that I was “frightening to others because I did not appear to have any feelings”.

M – Perhaps you felt you were living on a different planet from those around you and so you could not meet the expectations of other people?

.

G – Yes. Perhaps I did. And yet it went on. At age of 23 at a Carl Rogers self-development program, I did experience a form of spiritual awakening.

HUGE VIDEO IMAGE OF DR CARL ROGERS

G - My heart opened up for about three days of tears and joy... but then it promptly shut down again!!! So I turned instead to the church.

M – Well, God can bring relief to us all... but only ...only when we deeply believe.

HUGE VIDEO IMAGE OF A CROSS

G – Yes I agree, but I found it too hard; But I had an amazing experience when I was 26. I was changing my son's nappies in the morning sunshine. And suddenly, I was woken to the memories of Nannie number 1. There is nothing like the first sexual experience. It changes you!! That reminder triggered by a gurgling little bundle of 9 month old joy, cracked open my carefully constructed ego image, of being a responsible parent.

M - And it took you right back to your own infancy.

HUGE VIDEO IMAGE OF NANNIE NO. 1 (MASK)

G - As a result, I became an infant again, crawling around on the floor of our apartment with my own 9 month old son, crying my eyes out alongside him.

M – So all these memories remains with you, again and again! No time to forget?

G – Well, want to forget and believe differently. I want to believe my “breakdown” was actually a “breakthrough” into living a new life... more fully. A kind of second birth. Today it is how I ... WANT to live ... sensitive, vulnerable, present to the moment, no matter how difficult or painful that may be. Well? Question? Am I mentally ill!!!

M – No, just emotionally confused!!! So perhaps the doctors feel that with such emotional pain, you deserve relief with anti-depressants and sedatives to “see you through”.

G – Who is right? Maybe the doctors are themselves “asleep”, like I was. Maybe my “awakening” is threatening to them? Who knows what to do?

M – So perhaps you can rely heavily on family members ... and a doctor, who sees you ... with a “break-through” to be welcomed ... rather than ... as “break-down to be condemned”?

G – Yes my love. And I believe in Dr Walter Lechler, psychiatrist and founder of the Klinik Bad Herrenalb in the German Black Forest.

HUGE VIDEO IMAGE OF DR WALTER LECHLER

Walter was the first European physician to hit on the revolutionary idea that far from encouraging their patients' recovery, physicians were typically just prolonging their usually fatal dependencies. He spent 3 months in the German Black Forest Clinic in 1988. It was an extraordinary place, successfully treating every imaginable psycho-somatic disorder: alcohol, food, drugs, sex, religion, psoriasis, depression, cancer, nervous tics.... with LOVE –

M – Love? I like that!

G – Yes, the love of one's fellow patients (who were significantly referred to as "guests"). Like George, I understood everything, but could not make the journey from my head to my heart. I had to live through another 25 years of pain first.

G - He recommended to me to do what he had done. To seek help from the recovering alcoholics with AA - Alcoholics Anonymous!!! AA for his own chronic depression, not just medication alone!! He needed to help others ...

M - Help others ... like Mother Teresa ...

G – Yes. Because helping others gave meaning to their lives!!!

M - So perhaps, as you say, by helping others we are really helping ourselves. I like that!!! Help others to help ourselves!!! I feel good about that!!

G - Well the AA Alcoholics Anonymous helps me. It is not just for alcoholics but anyone who needs help to find meaning in life. Entry requirement is not hard to meet. Everyone qualifies with:

“I cannot reject alcohol and stop drinking and I am powerless to find meaning in life”.

I reasoned. “Of course alcohol affects me! Whom does it not affect? Of course I am powerless over its effects!!! I am not an alcoholic ... BUT ... I do need a meaning in life ...

M – So what does all this time with AA give you, dear?

G - Well twelve things ... it's a very powerful group-learning environment:

**SCENE 8 – AA SPONSOR
(WITH HEAVY LATIN-AMERICAN ACCENT)**

AA - I am Juan, George's sponsor in Peru. I am someone very like George, learning how to recover from my own problems by working through the 12 Steps of AA one day at a time.

Learning how to help others, turns out, is one of the most powerful ways of helping myself.

I try to pass on to George the wisdom and experience of this program that I have received from others. I don't cater to George's needs any more that my sponsor caters to my needs.

That would be my old way of thinking. I give him what many call tough love, as best I can. Because he's having a rough time right now, I have him call me daily at a fixed time (so he regains some discipline), and I make sure I am available. Maybe it helps him. It certainly helps me..

I want him to keep on coming back to his AA group, weekly or even daily meetings, so that he keeps hearing "recovery" from others, rather than lurking in his own sick mind, ready to drag him down again.

The AA 12 step recovery program which has three stages:
Stage 2 (Steps summary): Steps 4-9 should read:

Stage 1 - Find God – Steps 1-3 by attending the AA group, recognizing an unmanageable life and asking for support of a higher power.

Stage 2 - Clean house – Steps 4- 9 Identifying all our old resentments, fears and hang-ups, and humbly asking our Higher Power to remove them.

Stage 3 – Maintenance and help for others - Steps 10-12 by disciplined recovery with a new code of conduct, and helping others, with support of a higher power.

SCENE 9 - ORIGINAL SCENE

M – I think that is wonderful;

G – Yes and it inspires me to stay with it;

M - Stay with it? But if you miss, you can always start again,

G – I must stay problem/obsession free for life."Two Steppers" are notoriously common. They are people who start attending meetings and wake up (Step 1) and then move immediately and only to helping others (Step 12). Without the intervening Steps such people relapse.

M – So you have to stay with it or start again at Step 1. So what are the steps?

SCENE 10 – AA SPONSOR

STAGE 1 - FIND GOD

Step 1. Admit we are powerless over: alcohol, nicotine, gambling, money, depression, raging, women/men, fat people, drugs, policemen etc and that our lives had become unmanageable. No real control;

Step 2. Believe that a greater power could restore control to our sanity. Admit – no self recovery, but need for a greater power. Recognize our insanity e.g. "keep doing the same thing over and over again, expecting a different result". Meet on a regular basis with other fellow sufferers with whom to identify, asking God for an open mind to truth and a new experience of self.

Step 3. Decide to turn our life over to the care of God as our director, which brings immediate relief from "Selfishness - self-centeredness" which is the root of our troubles.

SCENE 11 - ORIGINAL SCENE

G – So you see how demanding it is to surrender myself to God, yet it does bring it does bring such an impact on me. Like the words ... we came ... we came to ... we came to believe ...!!!

M – Wonderful! So on to Clean House, which I feel I need too...

SCENE 12 – AA SPONSOR

STAGE 2 – CLEAN HOUSE

Step 4 - Make a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. Recognize our faults today and in the past.

Step 5 - Admit to God and ourselves and to another human being, the exact nature of our wrongs, and thus achieve a measure of self-acceptance, complete with all our flaws and habits.

Step 6 – Be ready for God to remove our defects of character, thinking and habits, with no more self-centeredness.

Step 7 - Humbly ask God to actually remove our shortcomings.

Step 8 – List the persons we harmed and be willing to make amends to them all, with help.

Step 9 - Make direct amends to those people wherever possible, except when it might injure them or others; This takes time.

SCENE 13 - ORIGINAL SCENE

G – Now, at long long last ... I begin to realize that my recurrent symptoms are nothing to do with you, my dear Miche or to old nannies; They are ENTIRELY to do to flaws in my OWN nature. So now with AA, I will have to write an extensive moral inventory, to ensure that if I continue to hold on to sexual abuse/victim hard-wiring, then I would stop myself from recovering.

M – Perhaps we all wait for others to “treat us right”, which is a manipulation that only triggers more trouble for ourselves.

G – Life can seem so tough despite the luxury we live in, while in Africa so many people suffer from poverty and hunger and ill health.

M - Yes, especially children. So George, now can we go on please to stage 3;

SCENE 14 – AA SPONSOR

STAGE 3 – MAINTENANCE AND HELPING FOR OTHERS

Step 10 Continue to take the personal inventory, and when we were wrong, to promptly admit, with discipline, dedication and rigorous honesty. For many of us, feeling so different and healthy by the time we get to this step, it is all too easy to start slipping back. In AA they say "our disease is ever in the background doing push-ups" - waiting for us to relax our program, catch us out and pull us back down again, possibly for good... It's a one day at a time deal...

Step 11. With prayer and meditation, improve our conscious contact with God. .

Step 12. Use spiritual awakening to help fellow sufferers, and avoid ways which would sabotage their and our recovery:

SCENE 15 - ORIGINAL SCENE

G - How about that?

M – I agree completely. These are wonderful ... they must bring peace and joy ... and meaning to life ... to you and to so many people ...?

G – Not yet. They also bring pain ... in the twelve AA rules for a new life!!!

M – Yes, but I now I begin to understand at last!!! I agree with all of these twelve rules. And now, are you winning, with your tough experienced personality ... winning the fight for recovery ... and so perhaps will lead others to, recovery ...? Because you are a leader!!

G – I must confess to that ... I was a leader ... and that was my old way of thinking. Now I must learn how to be just another humble ordinary Joe with AA!!

M – A leader who is so well known and respected by so many people. Your leadership power exists ... when you decide to use it ... in AA and the family too ...

G – Yes, for me now ... AA is a great life experience. The essence of 12 step recovery is a spiritual awakening, but not in any churchy sense. But I do believe that this spiritual awakening and a "second birth" and a "life eternal" that Jesus Christ himself calls us to....

M – So in AA can you join AA. Fail. Leave. Try to start again. Succeed. Leave AA ... come again ...to help others ...?

G - There are no dues or fees and no pressure. But I relax my own program of recovery, with regular contact with other AAs/recovering people, I pay a very heavy price. Each time I face a choice: move forward regraded with a lot of joy in serving others with happiness, OR return to the hell I have come from? So no.. I "don't come and go". I don't want to be one of the hundreds of thousand of losers in this program, languishing in hospitals, jails or underground

SCENE 12 – AA SPONSOR

(SPEAKING VERY DRAMATICALLY)

AA – As a humble sponsor of George in AA, we welcome all those who feel powerless over life and believe that a power greater than themselves can restore them to sanity.

SCENE 13 - ORIGINAL SCENE

M – So with AA we can try ...fail ... and yet keep on trying? I like that!!!

G – Yes, just like life...!!! And for me, those recovering alcoholics have something I desperately need. They escaped from drunken stupor, mental breakdown, sordid lives in ditches and gutters. They had somehow ... somehow ... somehow found the courage to keep coming back to AA. And so often ... somehow ... they turned again ... and began to become dignified, respectable, trusted members of the community.

M – And that is your deep need now?

G - Yes – perhaps for the first time ever. You see in AA, I witnessed the miracle process of transformation with my own eyes, again and again. And if AA could work for the great Dr Lechler, why not for me?

M – Why not?

SCENE 14 – AA SPONSOR

(SPEAKING VERY DRAMATICALLY)

AA – Our AA has strong traditions ... common welfare comes first... then personal recovery ... unity ... ultimate authority by loving God ... group conscience ... with our leaders as trusted servants ... who do not govern.

SCENE 15 – ORIGINAL SCENE

G – You see Miche, after all, with my breakdowns I lost my ability to cope with life. In AA, I see troubled people like myself, who are learning how to “make it” in life. So why not me? Why not anyone? Like the story of old Patrick who was in my AA small group...

M – Who was Patrick?

SCENE 16 – PATRICK ALONE

OLD DERELICT RECOVERY AA MEMBER WHO TELLS HIS SAD STORY OF SUFFERING AND RECOVERY AS A RASPY, NICOTINE-VOICED, 12-STEP OLD-TIMER ... WITH SOFT SINGING AND AA GENTLE BACKGROUND MUSIC

P - I will tell it like it was like and perhaps George will remember ...

I was so sick I couldn't attract flies... because I loved Guinness ... all day and all night ... I was so drunk ...!!!

Great stuff but not day and night ... I lost my job ... my family kicked me out...

I slept on the streets of Dublin... got to know a lot of old fools doing the same ... begging for cash ... stealing food from the markets ... ready to go ... suicide with a plastic bag ready ... but suddenly ...

AA found me... picked me up ... took me to a refuge home ... and looked after me ... so I joined AA ... no more Guinness ever Oh dear ...!!!

Such pain, suffering ... but companionship ... helping each other ... over a year going through the 12 steps ... all in a group ... with a personal Sponsor ...available 24 hours a day ... which I can change when I want to ...

And we have a Daily Plan:

Morning quiet time – pray for freedom from self will, review gratitude list, plan for the day with God, and read a bit of the AA book ...

In the day – phone sponsor, ask God to remove fear, think of someone to help, and pray not to be angry and go to the meeting group twice a week ...

Evening quiet time – Read some of the AA book, review the day with meditation, add to gratitude list and pray to give thanks ...

All of which reinforced me.

So in our group together ... we found joy with prayer and music. With the serenity prayer, with the set-aside prayer, with slogans such as "easy does it", "this too shall pass", "let go let God", "trudging the road of happy destiny" and with so much inspiring music like "Amazing Grace" ... it really got to me ... deep deep down ...

Until ... one day ... the impossible happened ... I began to feel that... recovery ... recovery was coming ... to me ...to me ... to me!!!!!!!

Not just physical ... not just mental ... it was spiritual recovery ... takes a lot of time and effort ... always together ...all done together ... in the group ...

Gave me strength for the day and hope for the morrow ...

So finally ...

I went back to work and care of my family ... a spiritual rebirth ... thanks to AA ...!!!

SCENE 17 – ORIGINAL SCENE

M – Indeed, what a wonderful Patrick story!!! What a hard life and yet with AA ... what a gentle ... caring ... recovery!!! And your story too is wonderful. You express it so well ...now ... so what can we do together to help ourselves ... each other ... and our family... the ones we love?

G – Now for a break ... to find the future ... and like Patrick ... achieve the impossible ...

M – Achieve the impossible ... together ... with AA and the family ... how can they help each other ...

G – So you see Miche ... how desperate I am ... to find a solution for the future!!!

M – We can only change ourselves ... not others!!! And we take ourselves with us wherever we go ... to every new environment ... and every new partner ...

SUDDENLY VERY EMOTIONAL

G – Yes, agreed, AA has helped ... and we can't go on living like this!!! We must find a way for the future or this end for me!!! ... Agreed?

M – Agreed, AA has helped ... we now must find a way ... somehow ... I might even make contact with an associated group for the wives of AA members ... does it exist? ... what is it called?

G – Al-Anon for support of AA family members. Of course there are partners who seem able to make this sort of transition without outside help. You may be one of them. But you could still refer to Al-Anon .. if it helps you to put with me ... dear Miche

M - I never cease to be amazed ... life has so many alternatives And so we have to laugh at life if we want to change it ...

G – Yes, so many alternatives, when we really take the trouble to search for them .. so thank you so much for listening to me, Miche ... it makes me feel loved ... on we go together ...

END OF ACT 2

ACT 3 – PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

SCENE 1 – ORFIGINL SCENE - ARCH AND ELIZA IN THEIR LUXURIOUS LOUNGE

E - Well I hope you agree dear. But I was so worried about your feeling guilty on George, that I invited him and Miche tonight to talk about his problems.

A – What a good idea. I feel a bit better already.

E – And I invited Dr Xavier as well.

A – You are a genius my love. When are they coming?

E – Just about five minutes ago.

A – I’ve been thinking about George and finding the meaning for his life. I never knew nannies (and priests too it seems these days) could be so dangerous ... to our meaning of life ...

E – Oh dear ... meaning of life ... not your old Polish stories again ...?

A – Well since you insist ... I will have I tell you ...

E – Again!!! OK ... with vodka support ... ?

SCENE 2 – POLISH WORKER WITH A VERY HEAVY POLISH ACCENT

PW – I am a Polish and I love Polish life ... with vodka ... which gives meaning to my life ... so easily ... in six steps:

1. Make body language confident ... so nobody meddles with you!!!
2. Keep only good memories of life in mind ... let the others fade away !!
3. Don’t get angry with anyone ... blame yourself ... for being a dumbo!!!
4. Meditate deeply every day ... and get mind-body under control ...!!!
5. When something seems impossible ... then ... do it anyway ...!!!
6. When too old and too sick ... then you gotta go ... go quickly ... don’t hang about ... just leave a lovely healthy memory ... and some cash ... for the kids ... to be happy ...!!

So there you are ... the Polish way of life ... with vodka medication!

E – With Vodka daily from 7 a.m. ... thank you Arch ... for the same old Polish stories ... I hear them so many times I almost believe them ... but not quite ... I don’t really like vodka ... like you I prefer gin and tonic ...

A – Thank you for encouraging me dear. Shall I now prepare a little drink to make them feel relaxed?

E – Good idea. For me too ...

RING OF BELL AND ENTER DR XAVIER

D – Good evening. It was so kind of you to invite me again.

A – Welcome indeed, Dr Xavier. George and Miche are coming too. A family gathering to resolve problems ...

D – That's a very good idea! Family support is critical to resolve George's problems. He finds doctors like me, too tough!

A – Tough?

D – Yes. George thinks we see him as: "just another case". He may feel: "what the hell ... do they know about this hell ... that I am in?"

A – And do they know?

D – Indeed yes!! But they only know about it from the outside. They may have never been through it, like AA's Dr Silkworth with his his famous 1934 endorsement of AA.

SCENE 3 – AA'S DR SILKWORTH

In late 1934 I attended a patient who, though he had been a competent businessman of good earning capacity, was an alcoholic of a type I had come to regard as hopeless.

In the course of his third treatment he acquired certain ideas concerning a possible means of recovery. As part of his rehabilitation he commenced to present his conceptions to other alcoholics, impressing upon them that they must do likewise with still others.

This has become the basis of a rapidly growing fellowship of these men and their families. This man and over one hundred others appear to have recovered from alcohol and other lifetime problems. In groups you may rely absolutely on anything they say about themselves.

I personally know scores of cases who were of the type with whom other methods had failed completely.

SCENE 4 – ORIGINAL SCENE

A – Can that be true for so many of life’s problems? We must find a solution for the future for George. He cannot go on like this anymore!! And for me too ... I feel guilty ... for being so naive about child abuse all those years ago. Who would have thought that Nannies, looking after children could be dangerous? It didn’t even occur to me ... in my wildest dreams!!!

D – Well perhaps you were a bit too busy, with your great political career!!!

E - You were a bit sexually active too, Arch!

A – Thank you for tolerating me Eliza. Was I setting a bad example and really too busy to care for George?

E – Yes, with your wonderful political life, George may have felt forgotten, and thus more open to abuse. But that is the past. The key issue now is the future. The future! The future! But what is going on in his head now? He is now spending some 2/3rds of his time either on the phone or texting/emailing his AA sponsor and/or praying.

D – It is hard to understand. But AA can help him now!! He needs to find a cure for his feeling of “self-loathing” which he ascribes to ‘being sexually molested’ as a child. Frankly I don’t even know if that is true or not.

A – It did not happen to my other son Henry. He had same nannies. As a family we are somewhat at a loss. What to do next? His behaviour is certainly affecting everything and everyone around him. But what now?

D – There are many alternatives. Perhaps some medical self-hypnosis could help him to relax and reframe his problems, as a reinforcement of the AA effort?

E – Oh dear that worries me. What exactly is medical self-hypnosis?

A – I need another gin and tonic, please. It may help me to understand!!!

D – Well, we call it ... self-hypnosis ... it is ... mind-body control. People think hypnosis is about giving up control. But it’s actually giving control back to the patients, as an effective and inexpensive way to manage medical care, and achieve a healthy lifestyle. I think mental health is more important than physical health!

A – Agreed. Perhaps, and when we can laugh about life, we can control it. So perhaps self-hypnosis for ... mind-body-control ... might be the answer for George?

RING AND ENTRY OF GEORGE AND MICHE

G – Hello everyone!! Oh Dr Xavier too.

E – Are you alright George? We brought Dr Xavier so we could all try to help with a family gathering.

G – Thank you mother. At last ... so now I feel able to talk with you all ... about my problems With my dear dear family ...

A – Thank you George. That makes me feel much better!

G – Well let me explain. An important insight for me around age 45 was that my early childhood experiences were abusive!!! An older trusted person had invaded my most intimate space and somehow “stole” my sense of inner sacredness.

M – Sacredness? Come on, George? But that may be a cultural illusion, but very real to you, dear!

G – Yes, but I had no way of distinguishing between relationships that were abusive and those that were not. One day it hit me!!! In my own highly emotional life, I was casting women into the role of abuser, whether they were so or not.

M - Hooray!

A – That could be true!!! You women are so powerful!!!

E – Enough Arch!!!

A – There you are ... Yes dear ... !!!!!

G - Can you imagine my feelings of total disorientation? Thinking and feeling "I am about to die".

A – Reminds me of the tough nurse when I was dying of TB in Switzerland!! And for me, the peace, relief and joy of surviving... to annoy that tough nurse!! Thank God I don't have to go through that again;

G - Perhaps, in my mind I accept that there is no easy way out ... life is all there is... so I had better make the best of it ... get on with it ... and above all ... leave a good memory to my children ...!!!!!! My memory is important....

E – Yes! Tough times and tough thoughts, are hard to accept ... and even harder to understand ... my dear dear George!

G – Well, yes! And it suddenly dawned on me, that my tired old life formula of sex, power and money ... did not work ... it only seemed to work.

E – Why?

G - Because, if for any reasons, sex, power or money were absent, then I would revert to my child-like “role” ... perceive my partner as abuser – whether she was or not ... and perceive myself as abused! You see, my negative reactions, became hard-wired, to childhood experiences?

E – You have really got a point!!

G – So I was just playing God in my own life. I was deciding what role in my life others should play. I got myself into a mess so many times. And I fantasized about suicide and even attempted it.

M – You seem to be clearing your mind of these old attitudes. Can you begin to forget them?

A – Forgetting can be annoying ... or wonderful!! Perhaps we all need a little Alzheimer, to forget the bad things of the past, and to concentrate on remaking the good things.

D – Yes, perhaps, we all need to forget ... to leave our anger and bad memories behind ... and just keep our good memories to help us ... to find happiness together in the future?

G – Yes. And it struck me that I had been sabotaging my life for so long ... by blaming others But yet something (or someone) had actually saved me from my own worst efforts, again and again.

E – God perhaps with AA support?

G – Well, that is why, with the help of AA, I decided to get to know that something or that someone a lot better.

SCENE 5 - AA SPONSOR

(SPEAKING VERY DRAMATICALLY)

AA - In AA we believe the 12 Step program of recovery works by "attraction not promotion"... over a long time ... so beware of creating the impression that George is healed over- night.

Like every true alcoholic, he needs his AA friends to remind him, that his condition, is incurable, but can be managed!!!

He only gets a reprieve from his symptoms, provided he keeps working his 12 Step recovery program.

SCENE 6 – ORIGINAL SCENE

G – The AA inspires me!! What a tortured life I have had with addictions, depression and at times an obsession with suicide. With my Sponsor, I will recover and leave!!! Initially it was tough!! They advised me for a limited time, to concentrate, and to move into a room of my own and to remove all reminders of my old way of “doing relationships”. No kissing. No TV – or anything else - in bed. For a limited time ...

M- This was so difficult ... for both for us. For me, it felt like my world was ending – yet again.

G – Yes and the deep depression that I associate with addiction withdrawal, could set in again. But, my limited time may be expiring ... now I feel different

E – Different?

A – Different? How?

G - This time I know, that the old saying” the night is darkest before the dawn” is true ... and that sadness too will pass ... with AA ...

D – Well I am not yet convinced about AA, but this is exactly what Dr Silkworth believes.

SCENE 7 - DR SILKWORTH

The body of the alcoholic or depressive is quite as abnormal as his mind. Our bodies are sickened as well. Any picture of the alcoholic or depressive, which leaves out this physical factor, is incomplete. It is imperative that a man’s brain be cleared before he is approached, to give him a better chance of understanding and accepting what AA has to offer.

Some form of moral psychology is of urgent importance, but its application presents difficulties beyond our medical conception, despite our ultra-modern medical standards. We are perhaps not well equipped to apply the powers of good that lie outside our technical medical knowledge.

Treating the cases of alcohol and depression that we have followed through, has been most interesting. Many of the patients are amazing. The unselfishness of these men as we have come to know them, the entire absence of profit motive, and their community spirit, is indeed inspiring to one who has labored long and wearily in this alcoholic field, for so many years. They believe in themselves, and still more in the Power which pulls chronic alcoholics and depressives back from the gates of death.

Perhaps alcohol and depression are allergies of lost self-confidence, and reliance upon things human, and as problems pile up on them, they become astonishingly difficult to solve. Frothy emotional appeal seldom suffices. They need a power greater than themselves, if they are to re-create their lives. They need an entire psychic change or there is very little hope of recovery.

SCENE 8 - ORIGINAL SCENE

D - So that is one medical point of view

E – How do we know it is true?

G – I believe it! Now I realize that I was handicapped by my own negative attitude to the abuses that dogged me all my life. So for the future, I have resolved, one day at a time, to THINK differently. An entire psychic change to give me hopes of recovery.

M – Hooray!!

G – Today I start the day thinking deliberately about others and their welfare, no matter how I myself am feeling. Some people would call this praying for others, but in my case my primary motive is sidestep and avoid my abuses.

M – That gives you the chance of yet another good day...

G – Exactly!! For the future! It is early days yet, but the effect is startling.

M – What effect?

G – My perception. My AA perception is slowly changing. Miche, can you believe it ... sometimes, in the past ... you seemed to be so critical of me

M – Oh? No? No?

G – But, for the future, I have changed!! My perception has changed to reality. Now I begin to see you, Miche my love ... creative, funny, supportive and loving

M – Hooray!!! Thank you dear George;

D – Your reactions George are following the ideas from Dr Silkworth ... which is beginning to convert even me

SCENE 9 - DR SILKWORTH

Strange as this may seem to those who do not understand—once a psychic change has occurred, the very same person who seemed doomed, suddenly finds himself easily able

to control alcohol and depression, and the only effort necessary being to follow a few simple rules.

Men have cried out to me in sincere and despairing appeal: "Doctor, I cannot go on like this! I have everything to live for! I must stop, but I cannot! You must help me!" Faced with this problem, if a doctor is honest with himself, he must sometimes feel his own inadequacy.

Although he gives all that is in him, it often is not enough. One feels that something more than human power is needed to produce the essential psychic change.

Men drink to escape a craving beyond their mental control. Many situations cause men to make the supreme sacrifice rather than continue to fight.

They are often able, intelligent, friendly people. They have one symptom in common: an allergy which differentiates these people, and sets them apart as a distinct entity. This immediately precipitates us into a seething caldron of debate. Much has been written pro and con, but among physicians, the general opinion seems to be that most chronic alcoholics and depressives are doomed. Hence AA.

SCENE10 - ORIGINAL SCENE

D – Well done indeed, Dr Silkworth !!! You make a case for AA to help George, to reframe ... reframe ... reframe his life ... reframe his sadness. Reframe negatives into positives.

M – Dr Silkworth has made my day, George!!!

G – Yes, it is almost as if ... from now ... I can get out of life ... whatever I put into it, only multiplied tenfold....

A – Wish I could do that on the lotto Euro-millions, and win a hundred thousand dollars on Tuesday next. No sorry ... wait a moment ... not a hundred thousand ... no ... a hundred million dollars on Tuesday next ...

E – You wouldn't know what to do with it anyway. So Arch, please listen to George!!!

G – Yes, as I was saying ... It is almost as if I can get out of life whatever I put into it, only multiplied tenfold....thanks to that someone or something that is really in charge of everything; And thanks to the host of loving friends and family members. Yes, for the future, I believe I am beginning to enjoy an Indian summer... at last ...

E – Hooray indeed. I think it has taken George, a long time to move from his head to his heart.

D – George has known for a long time that he needed to do to change his life around. But ideas are easy ... doing ... is much more difficult!!!

A – Yes, doing ... needs a whole new way of ... seeing life ... and avoiding the same troubles again and again.

E – Perhaps, the trick seems to be to move out of oneself and start focusing positively on others.

M – I agree. For the future, no matter how little we can contribute, making a shift of focus on others to change ourselves ... like Mother Teresa in India ...

A – Perhaps George felt that doctors and even his close family members were indeed on another planet. A planet on which so many of us are barely alive at all, and just fulfilling public roles and wondering ... is this is what life is really all about.

E - So perhaps George, you have turned out to be one of the lucky ones. Without those early experiences and the pain and torment it brought him, he might also be on the same dull planet, wondering ... if that is all there is ... to life.

G - I had to go through the emotional "bottom" of giving up on everything I thought I knew about anything or anyone first... Without that passage through hell I would never have been willing to recover. I was not weak but much too proud, too self-sufficient and too self-centered.

A – Can it be that in the end, the weak will inherit the earth... at my weak old age ... I do hope so ... and they find a new meaning in life?

D – Yes, and when they find that... abuse ... true or false ... can be reframed ... yes reframed ... so it can give them wonderful new opportunities.

G – I like that ... reframe the negatives into positives ... I am on the way at last ...

A - Perhaps from, old age I have learned one useful thing.

E - I should be amazed, Arch ... but please surprise me ...

A – Well here it is ... for the future. Yes, forgive our enemies ... both for their sake ... but more important ... for ours... and not carry that angry cross around anymore ... forgive them ... and be free ...!!!

E – Very good, Arch !!! ... you can always surprise me ...

G – But wait a moment. Forgive your enemies, yes, but not for abuse. Sexual abuse is an intimate invasion ... invasion ... of private parts. How can we forgive that?

A – Another illusion my dear George. Private parts are an illusion ... at my great age with medical attention on every organ ... the doctors have invaded all my private parts ... over and over again....they seemed to be fascinated by my private parts ... can't leave them alone ..

E – Yes. They do “ask our permission” ... but how can we dare to refuse? Our private parts are not private any more, my dear. Our bodies have become public property ... the gynecologists knows me in and out ... better than I do ...

A – Yes and with my prostate and colon problems, my doctors think that my private bottom does not belong to me any more ... it has become a public highway ... so I have get used to it ... so nothing is private any more ...

E - It happens to all of us when we get old. So forgive it ... and forget it ... medical abuse is coming... gently from the doctors ...

A – And the doctors make us pay for the private parts invasion ... and expect us ... to thank them for doing it!!! Well, we did agree ... or rather appear to agree ... So forget about your private part invasions, George ... and forgive them all ... forgive them ... forgive them ...

GEORGE HIGHLY EMOTIONAL... VERY VERY LOUD ... ALMOST ... SHOUTING – HIGHLY DRAMATIC EXPERIENCE FOR ALL

G – Oh dear. Another illusion gone ... !!!!!!! Was it all an illusion ...?

PAUSE

It's impossible!!!

PAUSE

But I must do it anyway ...

PAUSE SHOUTING

OK !!! Great...!!!! Great!!! It's impossible ... so I'll do it anyway ...!!! For the future....!!!!

PAUSE

I forgive them!! I forgive ...!!! I forgive them ...!!! ...

PAUSE

And I take this heavy cross from my back ... !!! ... at last ... I forgive them all ... I forgive them all ...

M – Hooray!!!

E – Hooray !!!

CALMING DOWN

G – Thank you ... dear family ... I am not healed overnight but I am making steps 1 to 12 in progress towards recovery ...

A – Can you also forgive me George? I feel so guilty about getting so involved in politics, that I did not spend enough time with you ... my dear George. And this may have caused your troubles. Can you forgive me?

G – I forgive father and you mama.

E - Thank you dear Georges. Now we can all feel so much better ...

G – For the future, forgiveness can help me to reframe ... reframe negatives into positives ... just like your self-hypnosis, Dr Xavier.

D – Well it has been a wonderful family interaction for the future. To help George and family to find relief from the sadness of his childhood problems ... which needed to be discussed, not concealed ... not concealed ... and not just treated with medications.

PAUSE

D - So a final word from Dr Silkworth

SCENE 11 - DR SILKWORTH

What is the solution? Perhaps I can best answer this by relating one of my experiences.

A man was brought in to me to be treated for chronic alcoholism. He had but partially recovered from a gastric hemorrhage and seemed to be a case of pathological mental deterioration. He had lost everything worthwhile in life and was only living, one might say, to drink. He frankly admitted and believed that for him there was no hope. There was no permanent brain injury. He accepted the plan outlined in the AA book.

One year later he called to see me, and I experienced a very strange sensation. I knew the man by name, and partly recognized his features, but there all resemblance ended. From a trembling, despairing, nervous wreck, had emerged a man brimming over with self-reliance and contentment. I talked with him for some time, but was not able to bring myself to feel that I had known him before. To me he was a stranger, and so he left me. A long time has passed with no return to alcohol.

When I need a mental uplift, I often think of another case brought in by a physician prominent in New York. The patient had made his own diagnosis, and deciding his situation hopeless, had hidden in a deserted barn determined to die. He was rescued by a searching party, and, in desperate condition, brought to me. Following his physical

rehabilitation, he had a talk with me in which he frankly stated he thought the treatment a waste of effort, unless I could assure him, which no one ever had, that in the future he would have the “will power” to resist the impulse to drink.

His alcoholic problem was so complex, and his depression so great, that we felt his only hope would be through what we then called "moral psychology," and we doubted if even that would have any effect.

However, he did become "sold" on the ideas contained in this book. He has not had a drink for a great many years. I see him now and then and he is as fine a specimen of manhood as one could wish to meet.

I earnestly advise every alcoholic and depressive to read this AA book through, and though perhaps he came to scoff, he may remain to pray.

SCENE 12 - ORIGINAL SCENE

D – OK Dr Silkworth. I surrender; I am convinced; You have conquered me with AA !!!

G – And I have at last found in AA , a very gentle supportive medical breakthrough for childhood stress ...? Let me explain ... it is so gentle ... a wonderful way to reframe ... my negatives into positives

E – Reframe? Then I’m willing to try that too ...

D – Yes AA can help you to reframe problems, in your mind ...

A – Reframe ? ... In my life I find that that cash seems to be able to reframe everything!!!

E – Arch, please be serious !!

D - In some ways AA is a bit like meditation and self hypnosis for mind-body control. Giving control back to the patients, for an effective way to manage medical care, and achieve a healthy lifestyle of good mental health. I think mental health is even more important than physical health!

E - And painless. Like a prayer to the subconscious mind to get support for what you want to achieve.

G – For the future. I am convinced! I will achieve my AA objective, Dr Xavier. Now I can forgive!! I can reinforce my positives attitudes for the future... !!

D - A great achievement ...

G – It is so interesting, that our imagination is so powerful. Our imagination of our loved ones can be so easily transformed ... into different personalities. So we have periods of fear and then peace and even joy in which we learn to live gently and love them.

E – I agree. I begin to believe that AA, meditation, prayer and avoiding stress can all help us to treat both ourselves and others very gently.

G – And in AA with the company of others who have chosen the path of recovery... we can help each other to recover ... when my recovery is achieved ... I can gently leave the comfort of AA care ... and concentrate ... outside ... on caring and helping others ...

D - Yes, but be careful with alcohol. So often people convince themselves that they have succeeded. Famous alcoholic "drunks" who thought they had everything figured out include: Arthur Koestler, Nietzsche, and Hemingway etc.. but alas they failed.

G – Yes, I agree and some may be alcoholic disease-free for so long, that they think they have cracked it, and can drink again. Alas, a recipe for disaster!! Another problem may be is to get so involved in helping others, that we forget that we are patient too!!! We help others for both their and our own need. We have , no "expertise" of any kind. All we ever have to go on is our own special experience, and so we are still dependent!

D – Yes people trained in medicine and social sciences have great difficulty with that one... dependency!!!

G – Yes, and another problem; Children treat their parents and nannies as powerful Gods, because they depend on them. The God-space in their brains is "taken over". It's as if their spiritual "plugs" are plugged into ordinary fallible human beings, rather than the higher power.

D – And they may be desperate when they realize something is wrong, and are in incapable, on their own, of "unplugging", and making the really powerful God connection.

M – George, perhaps just now, you need me more as your dearest friend, George, not your lover? You need the right connection, and I begin to believe I can help you ...at last!! Now, I begin to understand. To understand the dilemma we are both caught up in. To understand the very patient almost paradoxical care, that your recovery calls for, my love. I must say, I do like Dr Lechler's love approach!

G – Yes my love. It's a "one day at a time" healing. If I slip, I go back to Step 1 again. The disease lurks in my background; So I cannot safely play "come and go", starting again where I left off. No, I have to go back to Step 1 again. So this sense of danger will, I hope, keep me "coming back" - to AA weekly or even daily meetings. Then I keep healing and hear "recovery" from others. So much better than lurking in my own sick mind, which is always so ready, to drag me back down again.

M – So helping others ... becomes our lifetime key ... to long lasting recovery ...!!! Can we do it, George?

G – Yes!!! I hope so !!

M – I hope so too ... and with this powerful learning experience together ... I believe we can find a positive future ... Agreed?

G – Yes, my love. So, I will move my bed back from the office tonight!!! Tonight!!!

M – Hooray. And please ... don't bring your... telephone ... don't bring your laptop ... please. No laptops... !!!

G – Hooray. And please ... don't bring your office homework ... and don't bring your crossword puzzle ... please? No crossword puzzles !!!.

M - Can this all be true ... ? No wait. Wait a little while ... wait ... wait ... wait ... separate rooms may be important ... to give us both the opportunity to relate ... in ways that are neither sexy nor "abuser and victim".

G – Miche you are so wonderful. You understand and love me so much!!!

M – For awhile we can be gentle. We can simply be a "normal" everyday couple. This may not be what we bargained for this. But we can ... give up an enormous amount of “coupleship” ... for a time ... to give a new relationship ... a new chance for the future ... of 40 years ahead ... I'm not gonna go ... until I'm 90!!!

A – You may be only forty years more together?

E – Arch, please be serious!

M - Yes, and that gives you a chance to work your AA program of recovery ... and improve our lives ... Agreed? We will both do the impossible together ...

G – Agreed, my dear love ... we will both do it together

SUDDEN RING – ENTRY OF ALFRED AND BEDELIA

M – Bedelia and Alfred, what news?

AL – Great news mama, we are going to get married and you are going to be a grandmother.

M – Oh how wonderful. What a joy. Alfred and Bedelia married with a child coming. What a joy!!!

E – A joy for us too!

A – Include me too please ...

G – Oh dear Alfred and Bedelia ... you bring such joy to my life ... it gives me strength for the day ... and hope for the future.

M – Hooray!!

G - And now I begin to understand, that I must focus on the positive things in life ... and do more!!!

M – Do more?

G – If being positive were enough. I and countless others would have changed our lives years ago! No. I must do more. Now ... I must recognize that my disorder is selfishness, pride and fear ... and stop blaming child abuse... which may or may not be true. Just not appropriate for me any more ...!!!!

M – Hooray again. Not appropriate?

G – No. Now as a 50 year-old guy ... the key to my serenity, joy and "normality" comes from the realization ... that I am OK ... in so many ways ... as I am ... so I don't have to be re-made ... just re-framed with God's help ... and with your help, dear Miche!!!

M – That is so wonderful George ...!!!

G – So I must re-configure the “hard-wiring” in my mind. Must forgive and blame anger on myself! Must quit playing God. Must stop this "king baby" selfishness. And must help other people ... so that with you, AA and self hypnosis ... it will give us both ... strength for the day and hope for the future ...

STRONG EMOTION

M – Hooray indeed!!! On we go together ... it's impossible of course ...!!!!!!!!!! ...

WONDERFULLY GENTLY

M - So let's do it anyway ...!!!

TELEPHONE RINGS AND MICHE ANSWERS

M – Hello, this is Micheline speaking. Can I help you?

Oh yes you want George ... over to you George

G – Hello; George here.

Voice – Peter here from out AA group.

G – Yes. Peter. How can I help?

Voice – So pleased to find you George. I need a sponsor.

G – Sponsor?

Voice – Yes George; I feel close to you. You have suffered just like me, and I believe you are the one that can understand me and my fears.

G – Thank you, Peter for having confidence in me.

Voice – Will you be my sponsor, please George?

G – Yes I will! Well Peter, you know how this works. All I have to give you is what I have learned from my own experience of the program. If that is what you want, I'll be there for you

Voice – Thank you George. I will try to call early in the morning to fix a time to meet.

G – OK. I am here all the time. You can ring any time at all day or night ...

Voice – Thank you so much; George. You have helped me already! Bye for now.

G – Bye for now ... thank you for calling me ... keep well ... from now on ... I am always here for you ...

RINGS OFF

M – So, what was that ?

G – That was a call called a "Twelfth step call". That was Peter in my AA group; He wants me to be his sponsor.

M – How wonderful. He asked you ...

G – Yes, you see in AA you have to wait to be asked. No obsessive-compulsive person is going to accept an offer of help ... from anyone. He feels so different, and believes that nobody can possibly understand him; that nobody will somehow be able to crack his problems; and he must fight his addiction on his own, even to the last with the cost of suicide.

M – So now at last I begin to realize, that you could never accept my offered help, and I had wait for you to ask me. I had to wait for you to seek help from me.

G – Yes my dear, in the AA I learned that this applies even to drunks of all kinds at their bottom, lying in a gutter looking down on the world. Even me too

M – So in AA you never refuse another's request for help, but always refuse any un-requested help for yourself?

G – Yes, and with help for recovery, they need somehow to spend time, sharing their stories? Like: "what it was like? What happened? And what is it like now". Sharing with another person, to avoid a relapse. I have at last been doing this with you ... right now. And now, hooray, Peter has asked me ... me ... to be his sponsor... hooray ...

M – Sponsor so soon?

G – Yes I feel honored ... and I begin to feel I can help him too ...

M – Great news for him...and for you and me too, my love ...

G – Yes, for happy ending we have a reprieve from negative thoughts. Nobody but ourselves can accomplish it. Wife doctor, parents and children; can be supportive, but they all have more than enough to do with their own lives.

Your see my self-centeredness that has led everyone to be overly concerned with me, which is not positive for the family where everyone, except you father, is minding everyone else's business.

So I must learn to be happy just taking my just own place in life and the family, leaving everyone else to do the same. And so I must now learn to do the impossible ...

A – The impossible?

G – Yes, I must learn to resist those negative thoughts ...in the future; And I will!!

M – You have made my day ...

G – Yes ... what a wonderful day ... today !!! Such a challenge. Such a dramatic family interaction to do the impossible ... to find a joy in life again ... so that a sad past ... can gently be allowed ... to be reframedand to fade away ... And now I must help it more ... by being a sponsor for Peter ... hooray indeed ...

A – Hooray too! Your idea for this meeting was so good, Eliza. We have been able to interact so frankly, and I personally have learned so much;

E – Yes, dear Arch! It is about time ... and I've be very patient for 33 years. So now with all the family together, I'm for a celebration. Let's all go out to dinner now ... to the best restaurant in town ... agreed?

EVERYONE AGREES

A – And you too Xavier; You are a part of the family now.

D - I accept with great pleasure. You have all made my day !!! Learning together ...

M - Learning together ... maybe even laughing at life ... for the future ?

G – Yes ... indeed ... it's seems impossible so let's do it anyway ...!!

AL- I am so happy that, despite the tough family troubles of recent months, my parents have at last ... found a new way to understand ... and to help each other ...

G - Because most of us don't know we are addicted until it is too late... I remember ending up in Lechler's clinic saying to myself and anyone who would listen "but I'm a successful business person, a responsible husband, father and son... How could I possible be an addict?". "Denial is NOT a river in Egypt" (a corny AA joke). Those around me just smiled. Hah - we thought that too... they said.

D - Those who "make it" seem to have a deep sense of gratitude for sobriety (freedom from their symptoms one day at a time) because they experience it as a GIFT from God.

G - Yes - the most we can do is to practice H.O.W: ie Honesty, Openmindedness and Willingness. The rest is up to God ... and helping others ... to be positive not negative about their lives ... which allow so many opportunities ... when we open our eyes ... and allow sadness to be reframed ... at last ...!!!

END OF ACT 3 – END OF THE PLAY

**PERHAPS MENTAL HEALTH IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN PHYSICAL
HEALTH ?**

**THREE INTERESTING MENTAL HEALTH EXERCISES
TO PRACTICE AFTER THE PLAY
FOR MIND-BODY CONTROL**

1. IMAGINATION – TWO MINUTES

Sit and relax with both hands in front of you ... with palms facing ... about 20cm apart.

Close the eyes and imagine the hands are being pulled together by an overwhelming magnetic force.

Don't resist. Don't make any effort to move them. Just let your imagination bring your hands together ...

In less than a minute ... they come together by themselves

Relax and resolve your problems with creative imagination;

Note: Imagination is so powerful!! With almost no effort on your part, change can be achieved by the sub-conscious effect of your imagination

2. STUDY - AA MANUAL AND NEJM (NEW ENGLAND JOURNAL OF MEDICINE)

Study the AA Manual – Pages 2039/40
Study the article: Borderline Personality Disorder
NEJM – May 26, 2011 by Dr John G. Gunderson
Psychosocial and Personality Research Program
McLean University, Belmont, Mass. USA
jgunderson@mclean.harvard.edu

1. SELF-HYPNOSIS – 5 MINUTES

Sit peacefully and relax. You are in complete control!!!
One, look up toward your eyebrows, all the way up.
Two, close your eyelids, take a deep breath.
Three, exhale, let your eyes relax, and let your body float.
Concentrate on the sensation of floating.
Feel the magnetic pull on the back of your hand to go upwards.

Allow it to feel like a buoyant balloon and to float upward.
Allow your elbow bends and your forearm to float into an upright position.
When your hand reaches this upright position, it is a signal for you to enter a state of gentle confident meditation!
Concentrate, you will make it more vivid by imagining you are an astronaut in space or a ballet dancer.
In this atmosphere of floating, focus on your own health care goals ... to meet your very personal needs ... to suit and care yourself ... always in a positive way ...

Feel this care as part of your everyday lifestyle. Sense that you can achieve mastery over the problem you are struggling with by "reprogramming yourself" ... reframing your problem ... and reframing yourself ...
Use the "exercise" of mental self-affirming, and to "reframe" your problem.
Reflect upon what "self hypnosis" ... can mean and bring to your mind-body control... to you at a very personal level, always in a positive way.
Ask your deeper self ... your deeper mind for help ... in resolving your health problem relax deeply ... no hurry ... relax deeply ...

PAUSE

Now, bring yourself out of this state of concentration ...
Counting backward from three to one. Three, get ready.
Two, with your eyelids closed, roll up your eyes
One, let your eyelids open slowly.
With eyes back in focus, slowly make a fist with the left hand that is up.
Your usual sensation and control returns.
Let your hand float downward.

PAUSE

That is the end of the exercise, but you will retain a general feeling of floating.

At first the exercise takes about five minutes; but as you become more expert at it, you can do it in just one minute. So decide now to practice this brief exercise ten times a day...

By doing the exercise every one to two hours, you can float into the state of buoyant repose.

You have given yourself this island of time, to use this deeper personal receptivity to re-imprint ... into your mind ... the critical points of your very personal health care.

Reflect upon them, and then float back to your state of awareness, and get on with what you ordinarily do.