



A place of new beginnings

HOW GRACE SAVES US

Ben Wilson

We tend to think of grace as somehow being soft & tender, something beautiful & attractive. There is that type of grace; however, the kind of grace that saves us, that lifts us from the crushing weight of our addiction of our DOC, and also our addiction to the illusion of power & control is not tender, but fierce. Fierce grace rips the illusion of control from our grasp and we are faced with the ugly reality of our disease. Without the illusion we fall hard to our bottom with such force and pain that it shatters the ego and allows us the choice to rebuild ourselves with the program of recovery.

Many people imagine that hitting rock bottom is a one-time only event. The hard fact is that we continue to hit it over & over again. I am not referring to behavioral or chemical relapses bringing us down, although they can. I am talking about the rock bottom we hit when we realize and come face-to-face with our own powerlessness. It happens over and over because our grasping at control happens over & over again.

We begin to believe that *we* are doing the work of recovery rather than continually deepening our awareness that we are *being graced* with it. As long as we imagine that **we** have the power to return to sanity under our **own**, manage **our** program by **ourselves**, and keep sober without any help, we will keep swimming against the current and will eventually drown. It is only by letting go completely that we discover the current of spirituality that will carry us where we need to go.

We tend to forget that our higher power is doing for us what we cannot ever do by ourselves. As soon as we forget that, we jeopardize our recovery. That is why we need to go to meetings & work with other addicts long after our addictive behaviors have ceased. We go to meetings to hear stories of powerlessness & fierce grace. We must continually remind ourselves of the constant struggle between ego & grace.

We are living the myth of Sisyphus.

As a punishment from the gods for his trickery, Sisyphus was made to roll a huge rock up a steep hill, but before he could reach the top of the hill, the rock would always roll back down, forcing him to begin again. The maddening nature of the punishment was reserved for Sisyphus due to his [hubristic](#) belief that his cleverness surpassed that of the gods. We are Sisyphus. The rock is our addiction. Rolling it up the mountain is working the steps.

It may sound defeatist, but it is not. It would be if we had no way to stop the rock from rolling back to our bottom. The 12 steps are the only way to ensure the rock from rolling backwards. When we realize that rolling the rock up the mountain is simply the nature of our situation, and that we must do what must be done, we cannot be defeated by the disease.

True, we are never cured, but it is not about the cure. It is about **living sanely** with the **insanity of addiction**. Once we come to accept this, and agree to our powerlessness & the fact that we must work the steps continuously, we free ourselves from the 3 P's : ***Perfectionism, Procrastination & Paralysis***.

Many of us are ***perfectionists***, and will not begin a task if we think we might not perform it perfectly or have a chance to fail. This leads us to put off for tomorrow what we should be doing today; ***procrastinating*** and using excuses like "the timing is not right," "I am just not ready for that," "I'll have time to address that later," "I can't deal with that right now" and so on.

We keep putting it off, putting it off, and the next thing we know, it is months later and we have been without action, ***paralyzed*** by our indecision. We don't realize that all we need to do to start is to just start rolling the rock. Everything else will follow, gradually and simply, if we just begin.

This is a simple program but it isn't easy. We cannot take the principles we learn and thereby possess them as if we were taking a class or reading a book. ***We need to live them***. We can only get this program by participating with others who are also on the journey. Gradually we absorb it into every fiber of our being. This takes time and dedication.

The honesty required is sometimes frightening and painful. Anyone who remains faithful to this program has great courage and deserves deep respect. But we don't have to wait long to begin receiving the rewards. New freedoms, good feelings, and friendships quickly develop, and we are promised in this program to continue growing and to receive more benefits throughout our lives.



- What rewards have come from our courage and struggle?
- Do we see the need in our lives for this program?
- Do we think we can get sober, and get better?
- What is holding you back?
- Have you experienced fierce grace?
- Are you trying to connect with a higher power daily?
- Are you willing to start working practice, not perfection?

Ben Wilson, Transitional Housing Coordinator at Talbott Recovery, has been in recovery since 2007 and soon after became a volunteer, then an RA with the Talbott Young Adult Program. Ben now serves as the Transitional Housing Coordinator, working with both adults and young adults currently in treatment.

He currently writes a blog on recovery @TRCalumni.org, and is also a frequent contributor of motivating recovery articles for the weekly Alumni Newsletter. Ben is a founding member of the Talbott Recovery Alumni Group. He says of himself, " I love the 12-Step program, and love to share with others what it has done for me. My life today has been transformed from a disaster to a miracle at Talbott. I am forever grateful and humble to the staff at Talbott who were my treatment team; that I now get to call my peers & mentors."

Talbott Recovery is recognized nationally as a leader and pioneer in the assessment and treatment of chemical dependency and dual diagnosis with locations in Atlanta, Dunwoody, and Columbus, GA. We offer specialty programs for professionals, adults, and young adults. More information contact Talbott Recovery Campus-www.talbottrecovery.com or call 800.445.4232.