



Recovery Has Given Me Solid Mental Health

As a child I was always anxious with stomach aches and headaches that would frequently keep me home from school. As I grew older although these symptoms abated, the core of free floating anxiety remained. Most often the thoughts were ones of dread: "What if I go to the party and feel sick?" "What will happen if I feel dizzy in history class, shopping, etc.?"

My parents were alcoholics and when I was 19 my mother was hospitalized in Chicago for treatment. Part of that treatment was attending both AA and Recovery International meetings. When she was well enough to return home, she brought both her 12 steps book and Mental Health Through Will Training. When I visited her I would pick up Mental Health Through Will Training and leaf through it, impressed by the common sense philosophy as well as the obvious ways the Method was helping my mother, but I never thought it would ever be part of my own life as well.

How wrong I was because when my anxiety attacks reappeared in 1976 and threatened to cripple me, it was Mental Health Through Will Training I turned to. Fortunately there was a Recovery group in my area and the discipline of weekly meetings helped me begin to get myself back together. However, it was reading a chapter every day and trying to practice the Method that opened the door to self-confidence that "feelings are not facts" and set me free.

The group I was part of disbanded after only a few years and I was on my own for another 25 before another one restarted. During this time I got a job in public education that I kept it for more than 20 years. Not once did I miss work because of panic attacks or other symptoms although there were many times that I had to practice "the will to bear discomfort" and to "know that I did not know." In fact, I became so comfortable "wearing the mask" that never once did a student comment on how I might be looking or acting "odd."

I have been a member of Recovery International since 1976 and practicing the Recovery International Method is integral to my life. It is what guides my thoughts, my actions, and it has given me solid mental health. – Wendy Bell