

# An Apology and a Promise

BY Daniel Labbe

This post is written to and for anyone my actions and lifestyle has hurt.

Before coming to prison I had led an extremely dysfunctional life that caused more suffering than I can imagine, especially to those closest to me.

Years of alcohol and drug addiction, ~~and~~ Unhealed emotional trauma, and a lack of effective coping skills had brought me to a life that I was, and am, completely ashamed of.

Unable to hold a job I could not support my family, instead nearly every cent I made went to numbing the pain and shame I felt inside.

I allowed my own hurt to completely consume my mind to the point where nothing and no one was more important than finding relief. There's no excuse for allowing myself to get to that point, a point where I made decisions on a daily basis that ended up hurting someone. I couldn't see the emotional impact my anger, selfishness, and addiction was having on others because I was focused on my own unending pursuit for relief.

Who did my actions and lifestyle affect? The list is long including employers, friends, even strangers. But the people I hurt the most

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on a consistent basis was my family. The ones I love the most. To you, each of you, that I hurt I ~~can~~ offer these totally inadequate words; I am deeply sorry, so terribly deeply sorry.

Because words cannot express the hurt, shame, guilt, and sadness I feel about the pain I've caused, nor can words change anything, the best amends I can manage is to address the issues that led me to lead such a life and dedicate the rest of my life to helping others who struggle with similar issues find the healing they need before making the mistakes I made, or if they already have made similar mistakes, help them heal, ~~recover~~, recover, and lead healthier lives. This is what I have been working on for the past seven years. Again, nothing can make up for the hurt my actions caused, but I can help others find healing and the skills they need to not make similar mistakes.

It's impossible to imagine all the consequences those I've hurt have endured. But I've tried to. Every day I wonder, have those I hurt found healing? What struggles do they continue to face?

Some of the people I hurt are still in my life today. My mother, father, and some other family members. We have helped each other find healing and forgiveness and are closer today than I ever imagined possible. For this I am deeply grateful. Despite my actions and the pain I

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Caused, despite the pain they once caused me, we enjoy loving, healthy relationships. This has provided me with the support and love I needed to do the painful work of healing and recovery. Thank you, each of you who have ~~ever~~ forgiven and supported me, allowing me in your lives and to have you in my life... without your support I would never have been able to make the changes that have given me a healthy, promising life and future. Thank you.

Many of the people affected by my actions are not available for me to apologize to directly. As I ~~do~~ wrote earlier former employers who gave me more chances than I deserved, friends, strangers that I may not even know that were affected, and those ~~that~~ who became known to me afterward, and some close family members. ~~and~~ My hope is that each of you are leading lives full of love, peace, joy, and promise despite any setbacks and obstacles that have come your way, whether by my doing or other. Some of you I miss dearly and wish that there is some way we can find healing and reconciliation, yet I realize that this may not be what you want. For each of you, I respect your wishes and want you to know that I will always ~~ever~~ be available and open to helping you in any way I can. In fact, I would greatly like to ~~ever~~ be able to contribute something, anything, you need for healing or inner peace.

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For the pain I caused, that is the least I could do.

In case anyone is wondering what I've done to ~~start~~ address and heal the issues that led me to such a dysfunctional life and how I plan to dedicate my life to helping others, I offer this brief summary.

In 2006 I began reading self-help and psychology books and seeing how they applied to my life. Also, I've kept a journal ~~for~~ throughout my entire ~~in~~ incarceration. In 2007 I entered a residential program that helps people in prison who struggle with mental or emotional difficulties. At that time a sincere and patient therapist ~~also~~ began ~~helping~~ helping me.

It was an extremely difficult process that brought up all kinds of emotions I had never been able to deal with before. But eventually things started to improve. Through groups, one-on-one therapy, & my own studies, and a meditation practice I found healing. In ~~2008~~ 2009 I graduated that program. After that I dove into recovery from every angle. Alternatives to Violence, Toastmasters, and other programs helped a lot.

Eventually I came to the point when I wanted to help others. That's when I created and facilitated the Mindful Living group, a ~~&~~ mindfulness-based self-help group that ran successfully for over 18 months. That experience showed me how rewarding it can be to help others and also showed me that I could do it. This provided a

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much needed boost to my confidence.

Currently I'm in a residential program for addiction recovery and expect to graduate in October. I continue to study and journal about recovery, healing, and mindfulness.

In 2011 I began this blog. My intention was to share the skills and practices that had been so vital in my own recovery with as many people as I could, even though I'm still in prison. Recently I've used the blog to address criminal justice issues.

After I'm released I plan on getting my C.D.A.C certification to become an addictions counselor. This is a practical, obtainable goal that will put me in a position to help others and support myself. ~~And~~ In addition, I am going to offer a group similar to Mindful Living to the general public as a ~~sober~~ gr free support group. This isn't something ~~that~~ I will teach, just organize. We will meet and lead each other similar to other support groups but based on a Mindfulness model of recovery.

My dream is to have such groups spread out and become widely available. I want to offer the kind of help I was seeking back when I was desperately trying to find recovery, but never did. I want to help anyone with the sincere desire to change ~~their~~ ~~selves~~ - find the skills and support

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they need to make that change happen.

These goals are achievable, but no matter what, my life is dedicated to being a source of healing, peace, and hope in the world. I've caused so much pain how could I not dedicate my life to this end?

I hope that anyone reading this has found some healing, some peace or hope, in my words. There is nothing I can do about the past, but for those I've hurt, I want you to know that I am not allowing the pain I caused to not affect my own life. I am doing every possible thing I can think of to make sure something good comes out of all this. This ~~and this~~ is the most I can do, and I realize it isn't enough, I just hope that somehow what I've written here has helped you in some way. If I can do anything else, please ask. I'll always be available, waiting for the chance to help you in any way I can. And please, don't allow my selfish choices of the past and the pain they caused stop you from loving life and pursuing your every dream with all your heart.

My promise is that I will do all I can to be a source of healing and peace in this world, to help whoever is in need whenever I can, and never to return to the lifestyle that had led to so much pain for all of us. I also promise to be available and willing to help those I've hurt, and anyone else, whenever your need arises.

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