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COMMENT REPLY

Dear Aimee,

Thank you for your supportive comments and interest in my posts. My biggest hope for the blog is that ~~and~~ by sharing my experience and the practices that have helped me to heal and grow others will be able to benefit from it all. I've caused far too much pain in the world ~~and~~ to not use the rest of my life to help others.

If your boyfriend is serious ~~and~~ about changing his life there are some great books out there that can help, but all the therapy, books, and blog posts in the world won't do any good if he doesn't take the first and most important step: Take full responsibility for his life and for his healing and growth. This is the absolutely most important step - and the toughest one.

For years I tried to turn my life around. AA, self help books, counseling, rehabs, religion - but over and over again I failed. Despite my sincerity and effort, I would fail every time until eventually I got so sick of the cycle, so filled with pain and suffering that I gave up. That's when my life really went down hill fast and I committed the offenses that landed me in prison. Worst of all, I hurt the people I love the most.

The problem was that every time I tried to turn my life around I looked outside myself for the strength to do it. The right therapist, the right program, the right book, one of these would do the trick, "fix" me. But it wasn't until I came to a place where I decided no matter what, I was going to make the needed changes, even if the world around me didn't cooperate, even if life was

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Unfair, even if they tell me I have bipolar, even if no one helps me - I am going to do whatever it takes to change myself. Only then did changes begin to happen. That is also when the world seemed to become more supportive in some ways and I was able to make the most of my resources: family support, books, therapy, etc.

Another big step was letting go of the past. My younger years were devastating. None of it was fair and I didn't deserve it, but I held on to this pain and anger and used it as a reason why my life, the world, and everything was messed up. It was my ~~story~~^{story} and I lived by it. I told myself the world wasn't fair, people don't care, I don't belong here and all those stories ~~are~~ (true as they were) kept me from healing. I had to let them go. I had to forgive. This didn't make the pain go away, but it allowed me to treat it in a new, empowering way. My relationship to the pain changed and this gave me tremendous freedom.

Pass this along to your boyfriend and if he is ready have him look into the books:

- Houses of Healing - Robin Casarjian
- Man's Search for Meaning - Viktor Frankl
- How we choose to be Happy - Greg Hicks

And if he is interested I suggest taking up a meditation practice. His library should have all these books and more.

Thanks again for your support, Aimee. Your commitment and loyalty are admirable.

Peace