

Post fee #806

#4

11-8-17

Robert A. Russell, #V35292

Valley State Prison, A2-22-2Low

P.O. Box 92

Chowchilla, Ca 93610-0092

The Beat Within

P.O. Box 34310

San Francisco, Ca 94134

Dear Beat Within:

Enclosed please find an article I wrote for consideration. If used, please notify me. The address above is my valid mailing address.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Robert A. Russell". The signature is fluid and stylized, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Robert A. Russell

A note from up the creek...

Once upon a time, I wanted to be just like my Dad. He was an outlaw, a tough guy, and was "running things." When I was nine years old Dad was killed. He had been out of prison for exactly 42 hours.

Two days before he was released I was removed from the only home I'd ever known, Grandma's. Turns out my mother had regained custody of my sister and I. I was driven 500 miles north and delivered to my mother, who I hardly knew at all.

Over the next two months I was notified of not just my father's murder, but my Uncle David's as well. Then Grandmamma also died. I was told that my father and Uncle David were both killed in an outlaw biker club war. They both rode with the Hells Angels.

I was to spend the next three years lost and alone, eventually abused by my mother's new husband. I became full of shame and self hatred. That was four decades ago. This is the first time I publically shared that fact. I lived with and medicated that shame and self hatred for 36 years.

I am currently doing my forth prison term. I succeeded in being like Dad! In fact, I outdid him as I became President of my own Outlaw Bike Club! That club is the A of A, "A\_\_holes of America." I became a man feared and respected. I also grew more and more angry and miserable. At one point I had to get real with myself. For me that time came two years back when my youngest son, Asheton, was killed on his motorcycle at age 17.

The first thing I did was to admit I no longer used drugs, they used me! I was an addict and my life was unmanageable, as was my grief. In looking back over my life I saw I had been living in an altered reality since age 12. Way back when I was feeling lost, alone, and full of shame I got loaded for the first time. WOW! It was all good; no more shame or loneliness.

For the next 36 years I chased a high so I never had to deal with that pain, shame, and self hatred, ~~That was my life from age nine to 12.~~ But I was in denial, just thought I was "partying." My life has been hellish. I've destroyed most all relationships I've ever had on my quest to stay high. I have caused great harm to all I came into contact with, as do most addicts. But most all I had harmed myself.

Eventually the drugs stopped working. This was actually years before I got clean. Those were desperate years of running hard, although I didn't know what I was running from. Dear God, those years were painful! I was back to being lost and alone and full of shame and nothing I did, heroin, speed, booze, weed; nothing changed that fact for me. I realized that when certain "triggers" appeared in my day I had flashes of thought about suicide. I took a few years to work up the courage to stop and address the memories those triggers brought to the forefront.

I had to seek help. I was broken. I decided to find someone to listen to those shame filled secrets I had carried for decades without ever even articulating them to myself. It was hard, real, real

hard to voice those secrets, to get honest and stop the running. Dear God am I glad I did! I had carried that shame for 36 years, 27 of those incarcerated. When I was able to voice those secrets, I discovered in the telling I had no reason for shame. I was a young child who was a victim of people and circumstances far beyond my control. My shame and self hatred dissipated. I was able to stop running, and now, finally, to like who I am. Oh, I do not like what I've done, but I am ok with who I am today.

Most youngsters will face situations they can't deal with. How about you? If so, let me tell you a hard core fact; the relief drugs and alcohol offers is a trick and a trap. Straight Out!

I don't know much, but I am 51 years old, a certified outlaw and I KNOW one thing; drugs and alcohol, in the long run (often the short run too!), have never solved any problem for anyone. They merely multiply problems, then turn on you and for most, utterly destroy all goodness in life.

Avoid the trap. Got a bad trip you're dealing with? Seek help. Don't know where? Head to the church down the block. The pastor there will be glad to listen and help. Fact.

Don't let secrets and shame take your life. They will if you allow it. Life is in front of us all. Sure it gets a bit rough time to time, but it will offer up unspeakable joy too if you'll give yourself a chance.

Stay Strong, Do Good, Stay Clean,

Yours truly,

Russ aka Dago Slob