

Remarks from Bill White
June 21, 2011

Dear Friends of the Welsh Council,

Please accept my deepest regrets that my recent surgery prevents me from being with you tonight and at the annual lecture of the Welsh Council on Alcohol and other Drugs. I am, however, delighted that Phil Valentine, a dear friend and one of our leading recovery advocates in the U.S., will be with you in my stead.

These are exciting and important times. Recovering people and their families and allies are awakening culturally and politically in countries around the globe. That awakening is seen in the growth and diversification of recovery mutual aid societies, the birth and renewal of recovery community organizations, calls for greater recovery orientation in addiction treatment, and challenges to the social stigma that has long constituted a barrier to personal and family recovery. And that awakening is also evident in the rising recovery movement in the UK and in the recent activities of the Welsh Council.

If I was with you tonight, I would pass on three simple lessons from our advocacy work in the U.S. this past decade. The first is simple but profound: there are multiple pathways and styles of long-term addiction recovery, and all are cause for celebration! The second is that recovery is contagious: If you want it, you have to get close to it, catch it, keep catching it and pass it on to others. The third is that personal recovery is precious, but we have to find ways to move beyond our own redemption to heal our wounded families, break intergenerational cycles of addiction and join with others to heal whole communities. Our job is to create the physical, psychological and social space in which recovery can flourish in communities across the globe.

Tonight we stand to put a face and voice on recovery. Tonight we stand to shape the future of recovery. I wish each of you and your families Godspeed on your journey into that future and look forward to the day when I will be with you to witness firsthand the fruits of this work you have begun.

Bill White

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