

THE LIFELINE

June 2020 - Hope, Help & Healing for Everyone Affected by Addiction.

PHONE CALLS SAVED MY LIFE: JOE'S STORY

Vomit.

Rock bottom.

Waking up in a downtown alley.

My name is Joe and I am an alcoholic.

Six years ago, I felt something tapping my back. I felt sick. I groaned and turned over.

Another tap. GET OFF! LET ME SLEEP!!! I heard footfalls move away. Slowly the cobwebs of my dreams dissipated and the sounds of the street rose.

Vehicles. Somewhere a siren was wailing. I could hear pop music playing from a store. My head was spinning. I opened my eyes.

Where was I? What happened? How did I end up in a downtown alley? Usually I made it home. I looked down. I was covered in my own filth.

Shame. I reeked. I looked homeless. I felt homeless. People gave me some distance.

I had to lean on walls but I made it to the Metro. Somehow made it home. Or what was left of home. My wife had left me a month earlier. She'd taken our daughter with her. I hadn't even put up a fight.

Rock bottom. I had no money. No alcohol in my home. That's when I had a moment of clarity. I NEED TO HELP MYSELF.

A friend had given me the number to Chabad Lifeline. I called. Demanded to speak to an intake counsellor. Refused to give my name.

I was transferred to Ruth. I was nervous. Terrified. She spoke in her gentle, loving way. Tried to assure me I'd be safe if I came in. I panicked. Hung up.

Pacing my home. Picking up random items and putting them down. Finally, I mustered the courage to call back. Got through to Ruth, who told me that I don't have to come in. Instead, she advised me to go to an AA open meeting. There, I can sit in the back. I won't have to say anything.

I refused. WHAT IF SOMEONE SEES ME?

Then she had an extraordinary idea. One that is important for people to know about right now. The reason I am sharing my experience.

Join a phone meeting.

Almost every hour, there are hundreds of phone meetings for all 12 step fellowships. You can Google it.

Ruth suggested I call in. I wouldn't have to speak.



I made my first call-in an hour later. People checked in from across the globe. I remained silent. Real talk. I heard many comments I could relate to.

When that first meeting finished, I called another.

Over the course of the next two weeks, I continued calling in. At one point, I started speaking. Sharing. I opened up about my reservations and concerns.

Then someone said a line that struck me. It was the verbal kick in the butt I needed. He said, "you're so concerned about being seen going in to get help yet you're not that concerned about going into a bar, getting really drunk and passing out on a street corner."

When I heard that, it hit me that people already knew. I realized he was right. After that meeting I got emotional. I cried for the first time in years. I let out all the hurt, the shame, the denial that had been inside me for so long.

Then I called Chabad Lifeline. I told Ruth that I'm ready to come in. She assured me that I can enter through a side door and head straight into the intake office.

Ruth gave me a treatment plan that I followed to a T. With time, patience, and Ruth's consistency I have been sober ever since.

When I heard about the need for social distancing and quarantine, initially I panicked. But then I remembered the phone meetings. They've been a tremendous help. Chabad Lifeline's staff has gone above and beyond in making me feel connected.

If you are stuck in your home and need Chabad Lifeline, reach out. Their staff are still working full time and are only a phone call away. They're working from home. You can also call in to meetings. Perhaps if you share my story with your friends, they'll be able to get the comfort and help to make it through this difficult time.

Please note that names and certain identifying details have been changed to protect the anonymity of the author.

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SEX ADDICTION DURING A GLOBAL PANDEMIC

The pandemic and the stay-at-home order has been particularly challenging for people suffering from sex addiction. This situation has left many people feeling increasingly disconnected from themselves and others. Watch this incredible video with one of Quebec's only Certified Sex Addiction Therapists, Chabad Lifeline's Jennifer Kotry:

<https://youtu.be/-Tybn9ZBAFY>



FROM NEAR DEATH TO FIRST RESPONDER

10 years ago, an alternative school sent David to Chabad Lifeline for his alcoholism. Last week, we received an extraordinary text. Watch the video here: <https://youtu.be/32kz6d9eIj4>*



NEW VIDEO: FACING THE DARKNESS

Social isolation is forcing people affected by addiction, as well the people impacted by them, to face the problems created by addiction. Watch our powerful video on this at this link: https://youtu.be/Tn_qx3Td9ps.

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