

A day for them...

I felt the glory over the past week – now it is time to get back to what I do best.

Today, I will be spending the afternoon writing letters to inmates, residential treatment clients and people with mental illness that I have met throughout the years at home and various places. I will be putting together a discussion group for families that I will be presenting in Defiance next month and solidifying some speaking engagements with those living with mental illness.

Last night, I spent some time going through my journals of the past few years. I sure do miss communicating more regularly with those searching and trying to find their way and to gain understanding for their illnesses. SO – you better believe I have dug in and am writing empowering letters of support and encouragement to them all, today!

When I spoke Wednesday evening – I never lost sight of the fact, that behind me were thousands of people who have never been “heard”. It is my hope and prayer that on that night – they were! The journey has only just begun.

While so many are suffering through the events and life of mental illness – I do have a sense of encouragement for our community. Legal “things” and political “things” take too much time – but what can we do about that? Not much. What I do see is a progression in the right direction, however. Eleven years ago, when I started this journey – many things that we have in place today, simply were not there.

We know today that it is less expensive on a county to rehabilitate rather than simply incarcerate. That is just the economic impact – the human experience has even a larger impact. To place those who commit non-violent crimes that were perpetuated by symptoms of a mental illness into an environment with murders and rapists is simply mind boggling to me – but it happens, it did happen.

From the US Senate with Senate bill 714 to the Ohio Supreme Court with whom is the lead in the country for Crisis Intervention training and Mental Health Court Dockets, we are beginning to see the work that many have been doing for years.

It is an exciting time. I, however, as someone living with mental illness can say this confidently and directly – WE as the mentally ill must meet those that are trying to help half way. No one can change YOUR life for you. You can choose to be a victim or you can choose to own your illness. I ask you to own it and I don't say that with simplicity – I know that it is very difficult, but take it from someone that knows – the alternative is much more difficult!

To the family and friends of the mentally ill – we need you. We are a rowdy group – I know and we don't make sense sometimes, but we need you. My life, as it is now is the combination of family, friends, professional help and the fact that I will never allow anyone to look down on me again and judge me for my life's experiences and illness. Nothing would be possible without those around me – I assure you, it is a group effort.

Wednesday evening a song that was so very important to my grandmother kept crossing my mind when thinking about my mother sitting beside me. It is the song, "Wind Beneath my Wings". We, the mentally ill, all need the Wind Beneath our Wings because, I know for myself, sometimes I can't even find my wings! We ALL need a hero! My Mother and Father have been mine. So many don't have that, be a hero for someone that doesn't have one!

God Bless - Cory