



Let's Connect!

Sharing writings such as stories, poems, songs,
or art and other creative works

**created by students and
partners of**

Contra Costa Adult School Community



GOOD NEWS



Title - when I look in the mirror

Good news Poem - By Dylan AKA (Dior)

when I look in the mirror,
what do I see?

All I can see is a person who ain't what he seems
Confused but alone

I tell the mirrored man
that this is all I know
why can't I shake all the pain in my wrongs
my life like a riddle

No rhyme in my song
Just scarred, brokenness

in a man that's all wrong
when I look in the mirror

I see an abyss

in the eyes so brown
that my shadow emits

the demons aware of a sad, broken, man

I weigh all my pain

Then blow it off like a fan

when I try so hard

I just say that I can't

But then I wake up

and I look in the mirror

The mirrored man smiles

So now I don't fear

The life that awaits

was the life that I feared

now I am whole

time to wipe away my tears



CHOICES

DECISIONS?

HELP!!!

CHOICES?

What is DEUCE?

By DEUCE Students – 2022 MCDF
Contra Costa Adult School

DEUCE is...

I've always known right from wrong. I've just never chosen right. Now that my thinking is clearer, I realize that my life is more manageable and less complicated. If you believe in DEUCE and yourself, it will set you free from your insanity.

DEUCE means two, so if you want recovery from your addiction, then add DEUCE to your life, and don't be a statistic: "once an addict, always an addict." The only difference is we are recovering addicts. Thank you, DEUCE!
--John B.

DEUCE is a way of life.
DEUCE is my armor to fight
It helps me cut through, like a knife

DEUCE is an inspiration
It's the tool that gives motivation

DEUCE is the final piece to sobriety.
DEUCE is my key to society!
--Claude R.

DEUCE is a new start
DEUCE will set me apart.

I will lose my old ways
And look to brighter days.

DEUCE is a blessing in disguise
DEUCE is a chance to rise!
--Gino C.

DEUCE to me is a guiding light
That helps me differentiate wrong and right.

My decisions and judgements can sometimes be jaded
So it's important to ensure that I am not persuaded.

To know how to make good decisions and choose
To be a better person so I win in life and not lose.
-- Ronald C.

I'm far from a poet, much less a rapper. But without the DEUCE of my life I would be in the crapper. I know that here I feel so much better, eager to take on life and now I'm a go-getter.

Thank you for all of these lessons. It has saved me from a life of depression.

-- T. L.

As soon as I thought it was over, it just began.

With all these thoughts and feelings
I put a pencil in my hands.

Getting it on paper, digesting the pain,
Putting it all into perspective,
Dissecting my brain.

Moving forward one step at a time
Looking forward to class and showing up on time.

Life can change you in an instant
So make sure you are not robbed and
Protect your investment.

Your life is precious, your life is precious.

So take your time, get a rest in
Your world didn't end 'cause you got arrested.

It begins when you take responsibility.

--Michael M.

DEUCE is a reminder that I'm not too far gone to become something that's worth more than what I've been allowing myself to succumb to (jail, drugs, self-satisfaction). It is a place where I can be around others like me who are still willing to change for the better.

-- Steven S.

DEUCE is a tool, or shall I say, a place I'm deciding to join in.
Doing this for myself and my health, no reason for anyone else to chime in.

There's no debate whether you should obtain education or not.
Taking DEUCE is like taking a ton of affirmations mixed all in one pot.

Understanding, not demanding, 'cause who gets along with force?
God grant me the serenity to accept that I need this course.

To some it's babbling; to me it's counseling.
Evaluating in my life means my life is more balanced. DEUCE is.

--Rickie B.

To understand DEUCE you have to be ready for change. Change is what I need. To start anew I have to let go of all of the bad. Day by day I open myself up for change. I see my future and know what I want and have to do. Once I can step out of my comfort zone is when I'll be ready to change.

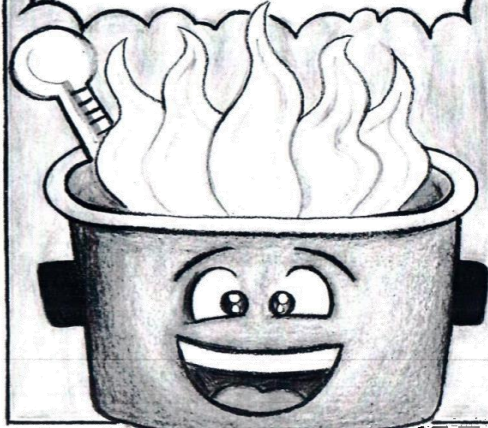
Forget what others say or feel. Change is for myself, for me only. I can change myself. One thought at a time. I'll tell myself positive affirmations that I can and will do whatever I need to do to change.

-- Anthony J.

KEEP THE LID ON
A POT, AND THE POT
GETS TOO HOT!!!



REMOVE THE LID
FOR GOOD MEASURE,
AND DO WELL
UNDER PRESSURE!



SELF-TALK

- YOUR SELF-TALK IS BASED ON WHAT YOU *BELIEVE* ABOUT THE WORLD AND YOURSELF
- SELF-TALK CAN MAKE YOUR ANGER GROW OR *HELP* TO COOL IT.
- IF YOU *CHANGE* YOUR SELF-TALK, YOU CAN *CHANGE* THE WAY YOU REACT
- *DIFFERENT* SELF TALK GETS *DIFFERENT* RESULTS WHAT DO YOU TELL YOURSELF?



DEUCE is giving me a second chance at a first class life. It's helping me cope with emotions I had no longer acknowledged. DEUCE is a great choice for my recovery.

-- Ralph H.

DEUCE is a program that helps people with problems they may not be able to solve on their own. I think it helps you understand the underlying problems we may not have ever looked at. At times we just don't see how we are hurting ourselves and others with our actions. For me DEUCE is a great place to start to look at these things, a place where you can be you, and get real info to use in real life.

--Robert W.

DEUCE is a chance to keep my thoughts in check, which enables me to keep my actions in check, and as long as my actions are monitored, my old behavior can be kept at bay - and if I can keep these old behaviors at bay, perhaps I can attain this new destiny!

-- K.C.

DEUCE to me is a place for answers and to develop skills within to combat whatever problems that you are going through. From substance abuse, relationship issues, poor self esteem, and relapse prevention, to re-entry to everyday society, DEUCE provides the building blocks in order to build the foundation that is vital to change the course of our destructive lives.

-- Angel G.

I know my life will be better 'cause I'm not out chasing a high to be able to function in that type of life. All will be better. This I know because I've lived sober before and I made it so far.

Doors would open to me in the blink of an eye and why? Because I was clean from drugs and alcohol and making good decisions.

-- Jeremy N.

DEUCE is a place one should go if they want to get their life on the right track. You must get your life in order before you can help someone else. DEUCE has helped me see me for me. It has helped me overcome so much and to see my past clearly. My future looks good. My outlook on life is bright. I've done all the wrong things; now I'll do what's right. I'll take it one day, one hour, one minute at a time and pray constantly to my higher power. I'll do what I can until my life is over to live life drug-free, happy, clean, and sober.

-- Mernard W.

To help someone else also helps me too. It's taken me years, it seems like forever. But as it's been said, *better late than never*. My life is not over; it's only begun. I'm no longer second; I'm now number one. I'll deal with my worries, my problems and cares and practice these principles in all my affairs.

-- Alec H.

DEUCE means a lot to me. I can now know me and understand myself, my faults, and deal with them in the right way. I can see my trigger points and see them as warning signs and can deal with them without hurting myself or others. I can now have a better understanding to help my relationship instead of harming it. To me DEUCE means a better outlook on life, living a conscious life.

-- Chester T.

DEUCE is for people to recover
For all the times they felt under.
Through thick and thin or small and big
DEUCE is here to get rid of all that's old.
No drugs, no stress, or no problems,
Times to forgive and let God solve them.
Today is gone; tomorrow not promised
But in God's name should all be accomplished.
The life we love, the life we live
DEUCE is here no matter what drug you did
DEUCE is for people to recover
For all the times they felt under.

-- Daryl C

DEUCE is for people that are sick and tired of being sick and tired of feeling like a failure at life because you keep falling for the same thing that keeps you coming in and out of jail, rather it's drugs, violence, or whatever our vices are. DEUCE is a class that we come to learn how to be better and learn how to deal with the problems of life in a healthy manner.

We owe it to ourselves to have freedom and to be there for our families who I'm sure depend on us for love and support. As we know, it takes two people just to afford an apartment these days, let alone a house, so with us being here, has left our loved ones feeling like the weight of the world is on their shoulders. I personally am tired of letting people who I love down. I choose to make a change.

-- Allen G.

I don't rap and I don't sing, but I will tell you one thing:

- Do the Twelve Steps thoroughly with a sponsor who has experience – I got lucky!
- Keep helping others by making time for it – you **can't** become too busy to help others – that truly is an important part of how it keeps working.
- Don't get lazy taking your own inventory regularly – the "old self" can be very sneaky.
- Awareness; every day you are :
 - Honest,
 - Changing what you can
 - Moving forward, at least in the mind!

-- Rod R.



PAY ATTENTION!

BOREDOM

ANGER

TOXIC RELATIONSHIPS

OLD DRUG HABITS

HIGH STRESS

DEPRESSION

DISTRACT YOURSELF!

GO AWAY!

EXCESSIVE BEHAVIOR

FAILED EXPECTATIONS

TOP & THINK

1 Angle of Domestic Violence

Straight to the Punch.

It ain't her fault I ain't got my manhood in check.

It's not her fault I don't have the job I am suppose to have.

It is not her fault I didn't want to wake up and go to church on Sabbath or Sunday.

It cannot be her fault that I cannot control myself while I'm intoxicated with alcohol or drugs, and suffering from depression. [She does not have to eat the cake].

It can't be her fault that I AM not standing like a man on issues were are having in the house, I'm just having a fit like a baby boy huffing and puffing and not listening to nothing. [DAMMMM]

I KNOW! I said, I NOOOO It AIN'T HER FAULT!!! ,

It ain't her fault she over there in the corner balled up, beat up crying and confused.

It ain't her fault

It ain't the kids fault

It ain't it her job fault

"Now look you a Man. So STAND for You, Her, and Them.

Also stand for whatever else you Stand for.

They believe in you, and they love her. Just like you love her.

Don't be mad at you & take it out on her & fall for that.

Stand as a Man,

It ain't her fault



DEUCE Is...

Striving to be a better you.
Coping with life to make it through.
Understanding this struggle will not be passive.
Being filled with strength to carry the baggage.
It's regaining power; owning your identity;
Smiling in the mirror, while facing your enemy.
My inner-me speaks out, what once was self-inflicting.
Like all things self that nurtures health, my light was be forgiving.
Now I seek salvation, serenity and support.
Hoping for a chance to change and build a lasting report.
DEUCE is sunrise on the mountain top,
And sunset on the ocean's depth,
The perseverance for which everyone shops,
And the soothing calmness which brings one rest.

DEUCE Is

A new start, a new beginning
I've had all I can take of all this sinning
Hurt myself more than once
But kept on going with or without any funds
Been getting high since my oldest was three
Cannot believe how I've neglected those closest to me
I try and try to build myself up
But the self-hatred always ends with me in a rut
One day I hope to be a dad my kids want
Instead of being just another court defendant
My kids are really my heart and my soul
This is the reason completing DEUCE is a goal
To see them again and hold them tight
Of the new healthy goals, I wouldn't lose sight
This is where DEUCE comes into play
Giving structure and meaning to each and every day
Aligning, assigning and constructing with meaning
Each day I commit to no more lying, cheating or stealing
With DEUCE as my compass, I am on a new road
It will no longer matter, I am no fixed abode
As long as I listen, read and apply
I'll be a clean healthy dad, until the day that I die

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God GRANT
ME THE
Serenity

TO ACCEPT THE THINGS I CANNOT
CHANGE, COURAGE TO CHANGE THE
THINGS I CAN, & WISDOM TO
KNOW THE DIFFERENCE.



DEUCE Is ...

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D. M

D.E.U.C.E.

Deciding was the easiest part. I'd been begging for help from loved ones for years. My cries went unheard and being ignored hurt more than you know.

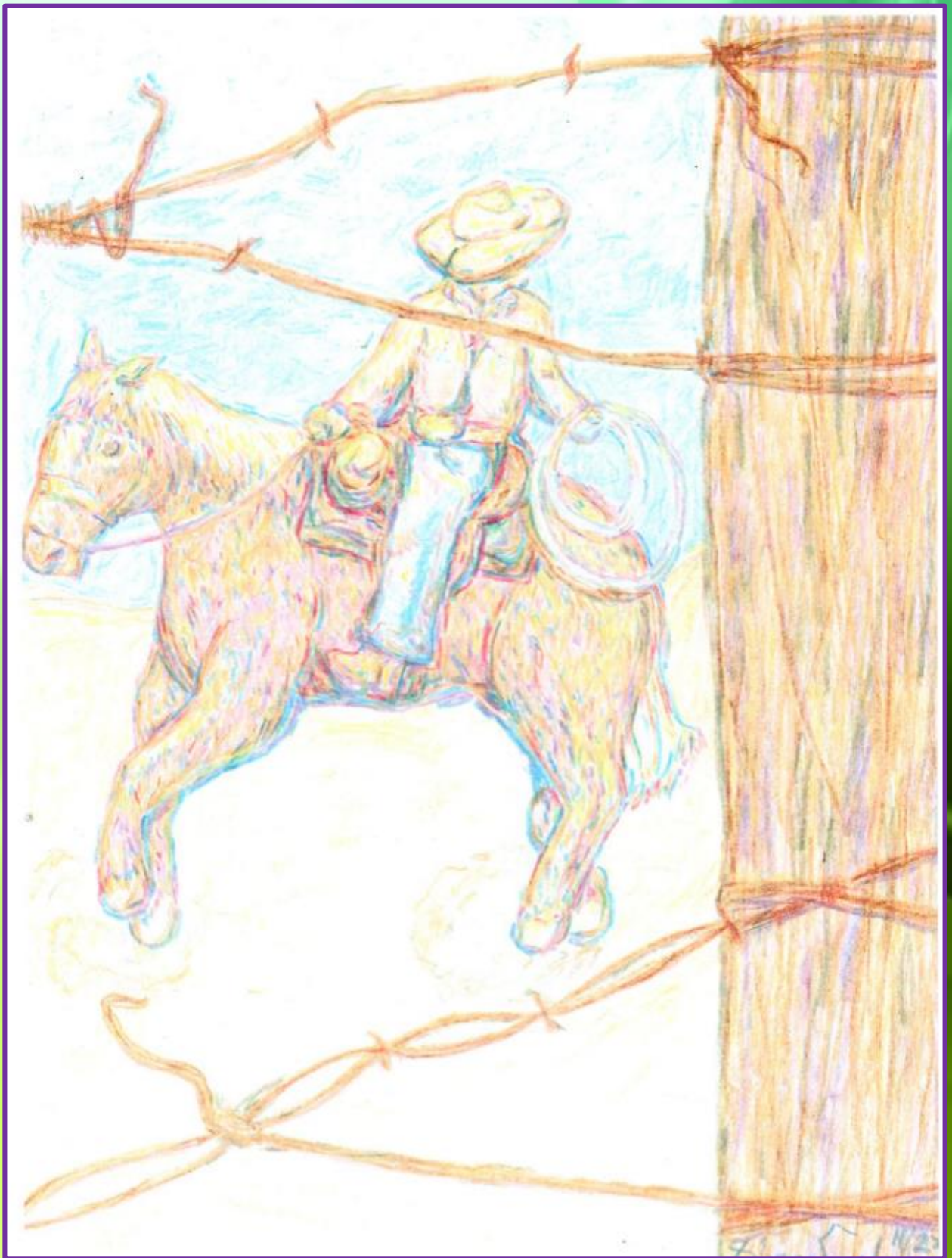
Educating myself is no easy task, but it is what I must do to help me and others too.

Understanding is what I hope my loved ones can do. First, I must understand that letting them go gives me wings to carry me free.

Counseling is just the beginning of this new positive life that self-worth and self-esteem is going to add value to me. New self-talk and communication skills so you can

Evaluate me.

P. M



DEUCE is Poem...

I've always known right from wrong. I've just never chosen right. Now that my thinking is clearer, I realize that my life is more manageable and less complicated. If you believe in DEUCE and yourself, it will set you free from your insanity.

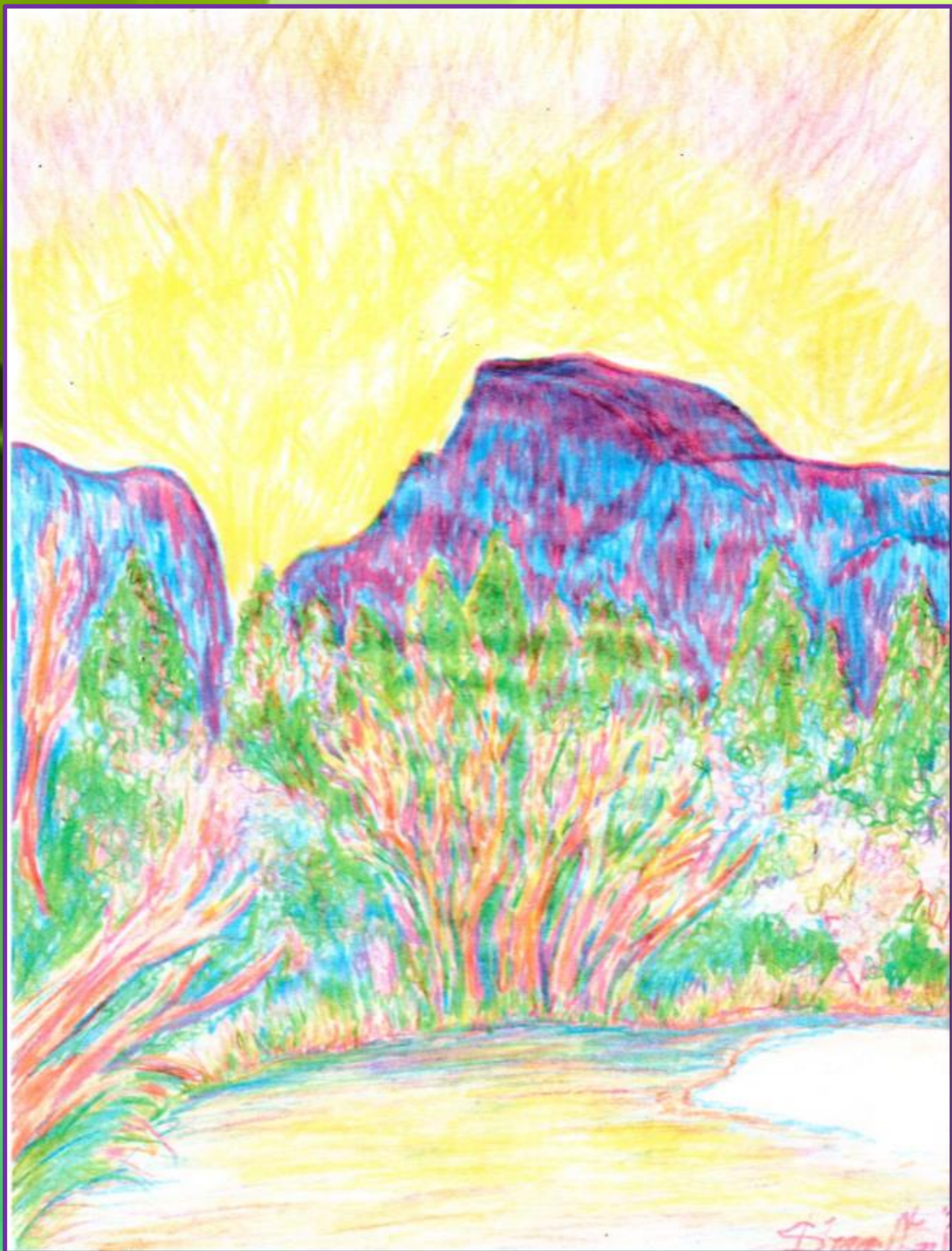
DEUCE means two, so if you want recovery from your addiction, then add DEUCE to your life, and don't be a statistic: "once an addict, always an addict." The only difference is we are recovering addicts. Thank you, DEUCE!

12/9/22

DEUCE Is...

I will not fear the day of tomorrow,
For the tools that I've gained chase away the sorrow.
The worry and pain are no longer my affliction.
They are only things that are part of life. Just simple conditions.
Today my time is focused on the things that I can change,
Me, myself and I – 3 in 1 – all the same.
For the God of my understanding has said this plain and clear
Love thy neighbor as thy self for I am always here.
I'm thankful to have DEUCE to help me along the way,
For the tools I'll use tomorrow, I'll learn today.

Martin Z



My Life in Addiction

By Justin S.

My name is Addiction. I lurk in the DARK
Insecurity and Fear is where my life SPARKS

Idly waiting with no sense of HOPE
Your Lover, Your Friend, you use me to COPE

You can't live without me, you need me, I'm FUN
What's good being sober when you're on the RUN

I numb all your feelings put your worries at EASE
Stop listening to others, I'm not your DISEASE

Without me you're nothing, vulnerable and WEAK
It's me who has courage, don't fight it, don't THINK

Your family and friends, they will just DISAPPOINT
YOU
Pills, Potions, and Dope. That is who will SUPPORT
YOU

You think you are strong? You got what it TAKES
Let's stop with the joking, my life is at STAKE!

I need you as much as you think you need ME
You cannot escape me, I won't set you FREE

So tell me again, how you want me to GO
That's right, 10 and 2, smoke me up and then
BLOW

My Life in Chaos

By Justin S.

Now welcome to Chaos, a party of
THREE
Me, myself and I host this PITY
PARTY

I use to stay high. I use to
RELIEVE
I use to distort my REALITY

You can't understand. You don't
know what it's LIKE
The anguish and pain that's
occurred in my LIFE

A ghost of a man. A facade to
MAINTAIN
Alive but not living, yet driven
INSANE

Familiar faces, a stranger they SEE
Unknown to the fact that this
stranger is ME

I too had ambition, the hope for
SUCCESS
The old me is gone, like a man laid
to REST

A slave to addiction, a victim I FALL
Consumed in destruction, a
bondage you THRALL

Enough is enough, this is no way to
LIVE
In order to change, this Habit must
GIVE

I fall to my knees, "Lord, Have
Mercy", I SHOUT
"I'm lost in this darkness, Help me
find my way OUT".

My Life in Recovery

By Justin S.

Nice to meet you Addiction. I'm your worst ENEMY
I'll morph you, transform you, Call me RECOVERY

I've been waiting a while for your desire to CHANGE
No Denial, No Fear, It may feel a bit STRANGE

I'll guide you and aid you on this EPIC JOURNEY
A Champion transcends, a Hero you'll BE

Giving Courage and Wisdom, Perseverance and STRENGTH
A feeling of HOPE, A renewed sense of FAITH

No more numbing the pain, You'll face it head ON
For when you feel weak, I will say you are STRONG

For those you have hurt, and to those who've hurt YOU
Make amends and forgive, Trusting time heals all WOUNDS

No more hiding in Darkness, I bring Truth to the LIGHT
No more shame, no more guilt, I set all your wrongs RIGHT

Now this Gift isn't free, but it comes at a PRICE
For the life you once lived, you must SACRIFICE

You've lost oh, so much, but with me you will GAIN
A feeling of Freedom, A new life to ATTAIN



SELF SABATOGIE:

We Always Step INTO OUR OWN TRAPS THAT we set. All In All we Are our own enemies and until we change the way we think, we will continue to destroy ourselves.

By John J
2023

I personally have promised myself and the rest of the world at least twenty times I am done with drinking and doing drugs. One might say "what until you get out", or you have said it all before, so what's different about this time?

Let me tell you what is different this time, first I want to explain how I got to where I am at today. I want to thank Deuce program, instructors and the Contra Costa County Adult Ed programs available to the West County Incarcerated. I have a positive and safe environment where I can share my fears of the future, and the shames of my past without being judged.

Since my first day of deuce class I began to feel a change in the way I think about myself. By following and completing the daily assignments, being honest with myself and participating I have experienced A spiritual experience. An Experience I was not expecting.

Yes, I have been to prison and many treatment centers, and I never have had such a clear vision of my future and as solid of a game plan upon release. I attend the Mc3 pre apprenticeship program as well in the afternoon and the Union I am going to join is the Teamsters Union. With the reentry help of the resources available I will go too truck driving school get my Class A doubles/ cargo International endorsements and work doing long haul. My dream job is to work long haul for Amazon.

The assignments Ms. Aster gives us are not very difficult to complete. But applying the principles to your life is where the challenge comes in. I wake up and give myself affirmations like I am worth it today, I can be anything I put my mind to be, I have strength today with My Higher Power, I can stay clean and sober today.

One by one the barriers and the rut I was in seemed too disappear, my depression was filled with self-esteem. My doubts have been replaced with a realistic vision of my life and my future.

Having not been in a class room setting in so long, I think it's neat that I raise my hand, patiently waiting to be called on, too the answer the Teachers questions.

I picked up an N.A. blue book at the library and am on my third time reading it through. I underline what's important and pertains to me. I take notes and I learn every time I open it about my recovery and about my life as an addict and criminal behaviors around my addiction.

My Higher Power has been moving mountains in my life on a daily basis. Like I was saying I have a clear vision of what I want in my life. My life goals, my dreams, and my recovery goals, I have self-confidence today. Confidence only gained by seeing the good in others and trying to implement those principles in my own life. By sharing and being helpful as well as sympathizing and compromising have I learned to grow spiritually.

Today I am celebrating my 60 days clean and sober. My sobriety date is June 12 ,23. I will work the steps, get a sponsor, go to meetings regularly, and have a support group to help me in the times where I am at high risk to relapse. I have joy today and a freedom that is hard to explain. I give all the credit to the program of recovery, one addict helping another, and to my Higher Power.

I know the real test is when I am released from jail. I can say I have a real solid game plan and I am ready to start living again.

I am extremely grateful for my Colleagues in class, Ms. Aster, The Mc3, D.E.U.C.E. program, The Men and Woman of Purpose, for my new vision and reality. Remember that Easy Does IT, Live and let live, and One day at a time.

By Lacy B.



And to make life just a little sweeter...



Emergency Apple Pie!

5-- Apples peeled, cored, and diced into 1-inch pieces.

1-- package frosted brown sugar pop tart.

½-- cup maple brown sugar oatmeal.

6-- vanilla caramel -made into sauce.

1--Contra Costa County issue breakfast cake

10-- Iced oatmeal cookies, crushed to powder.

- Put the finished (cut) apples in a bowl and fill the bowl with hot water halfway.
- Crumble pop tart and add to the bowl.
- Mix very well until all the water has soaked up the pop tart.
- Heat in microwave until mixture starts to boil over.
- Take out the mixture, mix it and put in the microwave again.
- Repeat the process, 4 or 5 times, until the mixture is thick like a pie.
- Take the bowl out and set it aside.
- Next, add caramels in a cup and melt and stir them.
- Add two tablespoons of milk (optional).
- Stir until it becomes a sauce.
- Layer your bowl with oatmeal, then the crumbled-up breakfast cake
- Then add cookie crumble.
- Then pour caramel sauce on top.



**So how did you enjoy our first edition of
Let's Connect!?**
Please let us know.
To get in on future publications...

Participation Wanted!

You matter!

We want YOU
to share your thoughts too.
If interested, submit a short
self-improvement related
poem, success story, drawing, etc.
for an upcoming
Let's Connect publication.

It must be appropriate for school.

**Send it to Schools –
Let's Connect publication.**