

# Substance Abuse: Why Should You Care?

Presented By:

Judge Joe Buckner

Retired Chief District Court Judge



# Substance Abuse

- “excessive use of a drug without medical justification”
- Not limited to illegal drugs
- Can include the overuse of alcohol and narcotics

Merriam Webster

# Substance Abuse is an issue in

---

1. My immediate family
2. My extended family, but not my immediate family
3. My circle of friends, but not my family
4. None of the above

# Recovery from SA has occurred in

---

1. My immediate family
2. My extended family, but not my immediate family
3. My circle of friends, but not my family
4. I do not know anyone in recovery

# Substance abuse is

---

1. The single largest social problem we have today
2. An issue of importance, but somewhere in the middle
3. Not very prevalent

# As an attorney I think

---

1. SA issues should be handled by other agencies
2. There's not much I can do, but I want to understand it
3. The courts power can be used to positively affect those with SA
4. SA should not affect my decisions

# Substance abusers who commit crimes

---

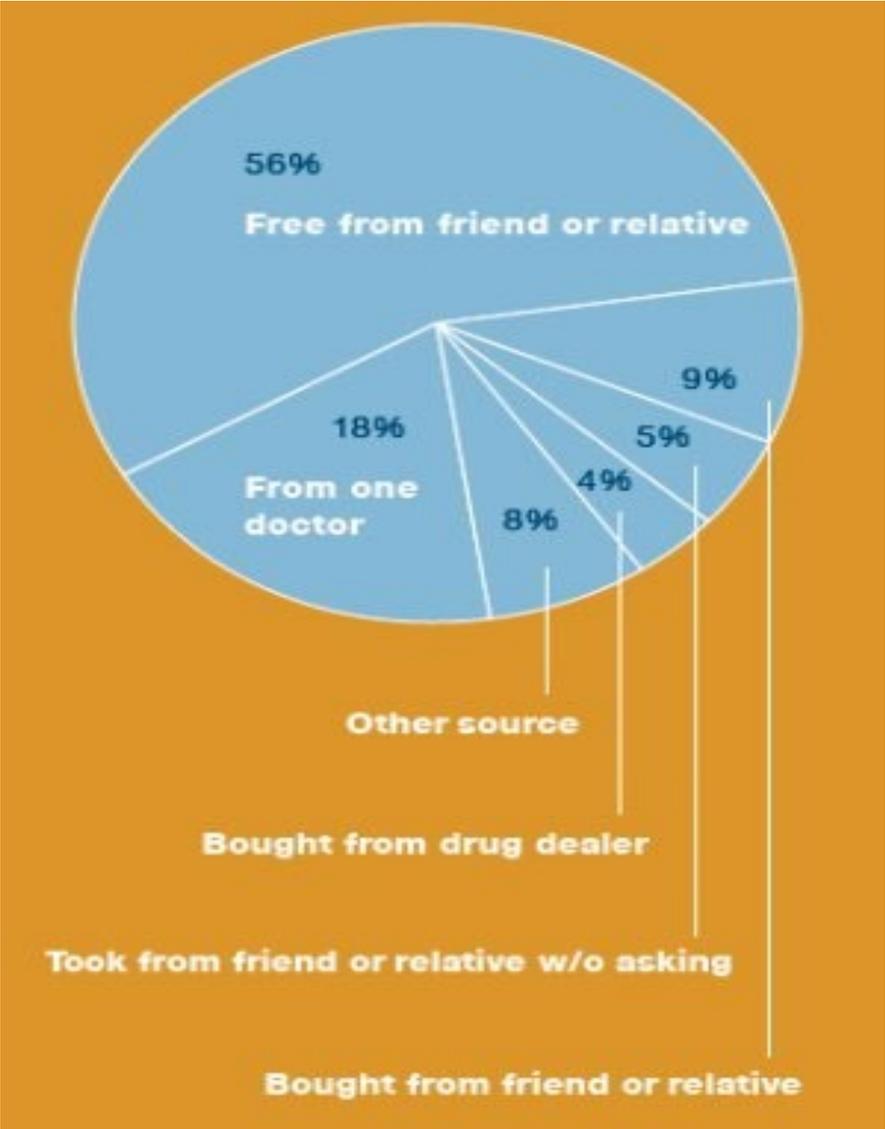
1. Are not treatable ~ resigned to a future of low achievement and probable recidivism
2. Can have positive and productive lives if they get clean and sober

# Narcotic pain medication prescriptions

---

1. Are valid and need not be questioned because use is monitored by a qualified doctor
2. May be valid, but need monitoring by someone who understands SA
3. Are typically not valid because they are over prescribed

# Source of Pain Relievers for Most Recent Non-Medical Use



Source: SAMHSA, 2008 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (September 2009).

# Which contributes to the most deaths each year?

---

1. Illegal Drugs
- ✓ 2. Tobacco
3. Alcohol
4. Prescription Narcotics

Tobacco -  
400,000

Which contributes to the second most deaths each year?

---

1. Illegal Drugs
2. Tobacco
- ✓ 3. Alcohol
4. Prescription Narcotics

**Alcohol - 85,000**

In order from least to most:

1. Illegal Drugs\* – 14,300 – 16,500
2. Prescription Narcotics\* – 14,800 - 16,500
3. Alcohol – 85,000
4. Tobacco – 435,000

\*There are many conflicting statistics: Reports of “over 100,000” deaths caused by “drugs” – but the “drugs” category may include illegal drugs, narcotic prescriptions, valid non-narcotic prescriptions, and prescription errors.

# Substances and Cars

Alcohol-related motor vehicle crashes kill someone every **31** minutes and injure someone every **2** minutes.

**12% of all adults drive under the influence at least once a year**



# Study by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

- “1 in 8 weekend nighttime drivers tested positive for illicit drugs” (2007)
- “1 in 3 motor vehicle fatalities with known drug test results tested positive for drugs” (2009)

[https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/state\\_profile\\_-\\_north\\_carolina.pdf](https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/state_profile_-_north_carolina.pdf)

# The Victims



- Jade Stephens
- Killed on the way home from her 10<sup>th</sup> birthday party when a drunk driver ran a stop sign and T-boned her family's car



Darlene McGee, Felecia Harris, and Jahnice Smith

- Killed on on the way home from a family reunion when their car was struck head on by a drunk driver

# Jessica Rasdall & Laura Gorman



- Rasdall (*right*) drove herself and Gorman (*left*) home drunk after a night of clubbing
- Crashed her car, injuring herself and killing her Gorman, her best friend

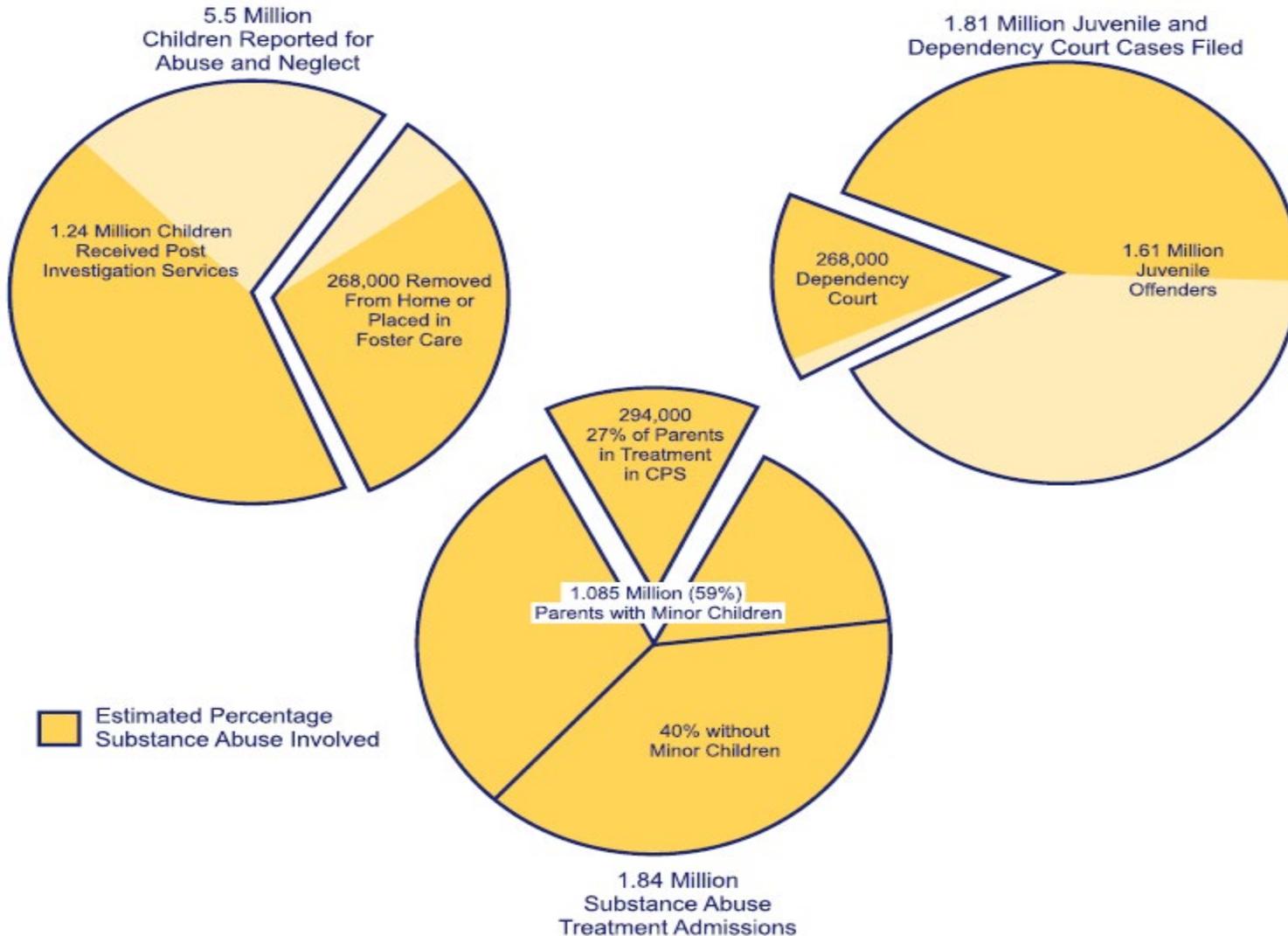
# The Facts: NC

- 30<sup>th</sup> Highest Drug Overdose Mortality Rate in the country
- 28% of fatal car crashes were alcohol related (2013)
- Orange County: 30.8% of fatal car crashes were alcohol related (2013)

<http://ncaf.hsrb.unc.edu/injuries.cfm>

<http://healthyamericans.org/reports/drugabuse2013/release.php?stateid=NC>

# Children and Parents in Three Systems



2004 (SAMSA)

# Abuse & Neglect

“Need NSC of drug-addicted baby to be discharged from hospital tomorrow. 5th child. Mother has none in her care.”

# Abuse & Neglect

- “Need NSC of baby. Mother wrecked car while drunk. Baby in car. Mom incarcerated. Father AWOL.”

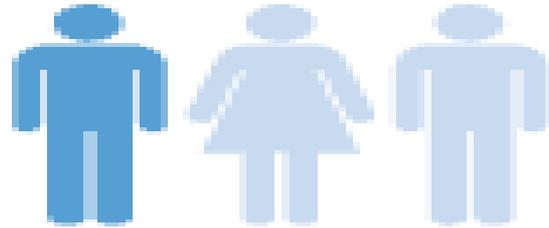
# Abuse & Neglect

- “Need NSC of two kids left alone while mom out drinking”
- “Need NSC of two children, infant in hospital with severe withdrawal.”

# Abuse & Neglect

- “Need NSC of two kids. Both parents jailed for drug charges.”
- “Need NSC of newborn, drugs/serious domestic violence.”

1/3 of state prisoners  
claimed to have committed  
offense under influence of  
drugs

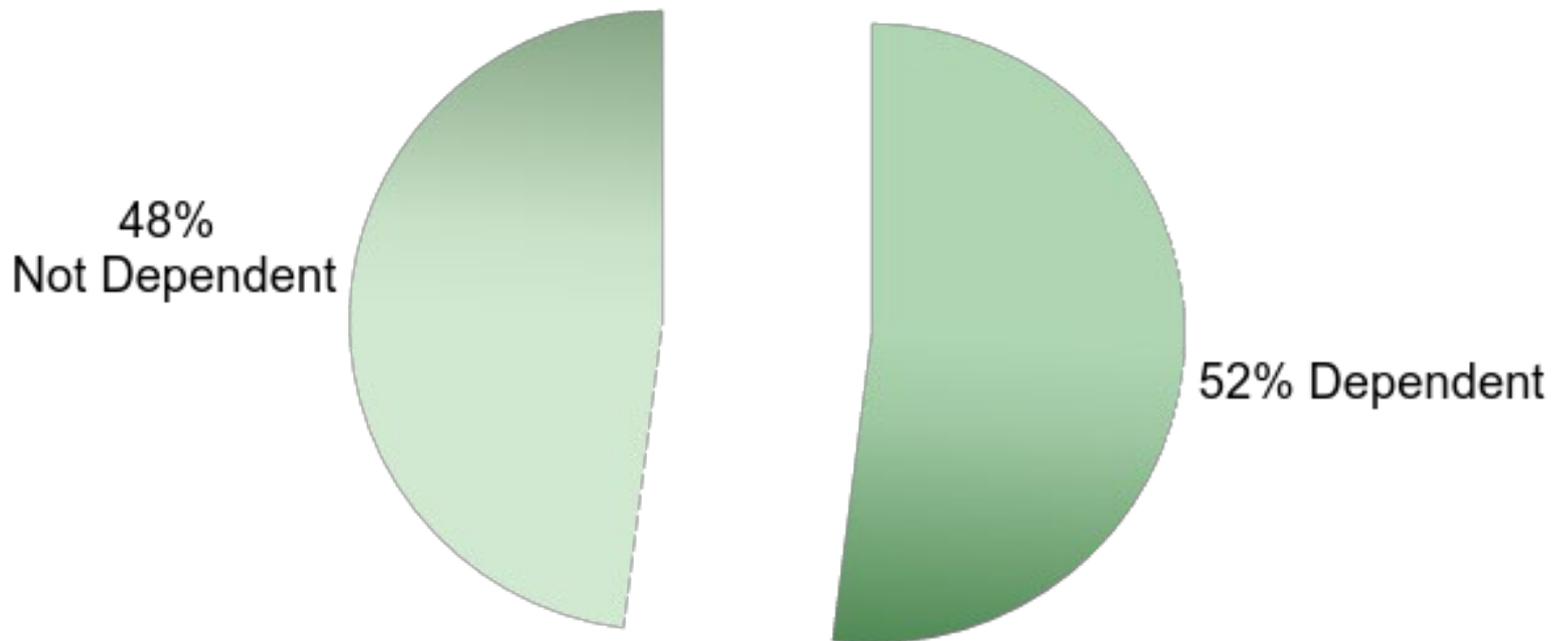


44% of male jail inmates were found to be dependent on drugs or alcohol

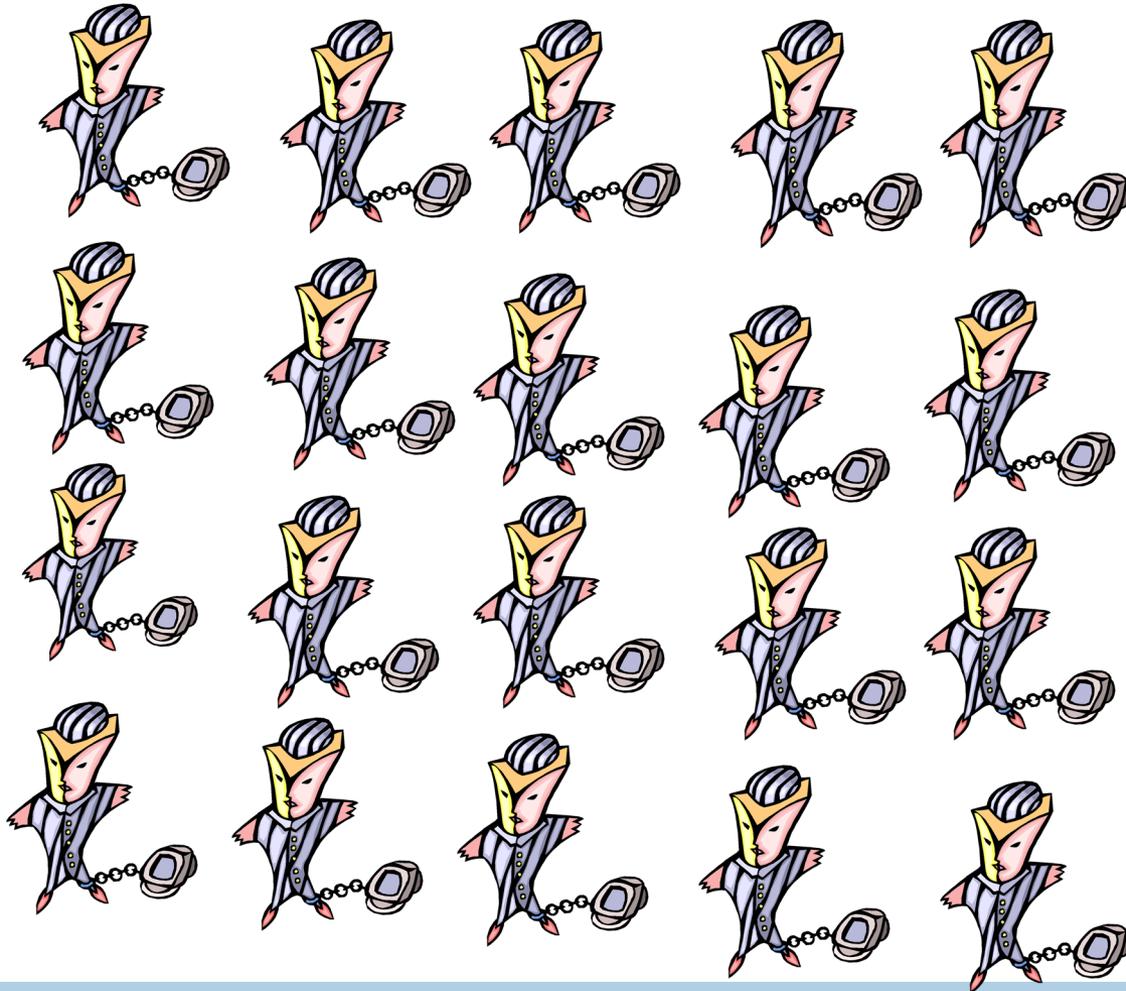


# 52% of female inmates were found to be dependent on drugs/alcohol

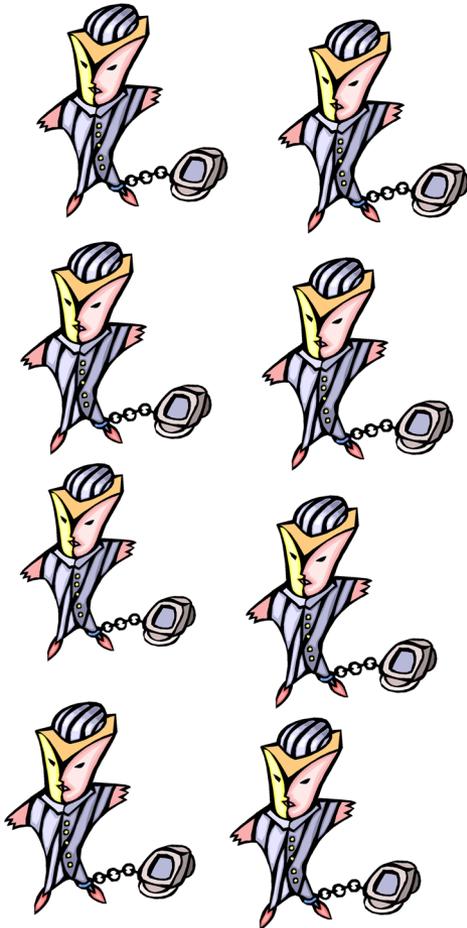
Female Inmates



# If There Were No Substance Abuse



# We'd have this many prisoners

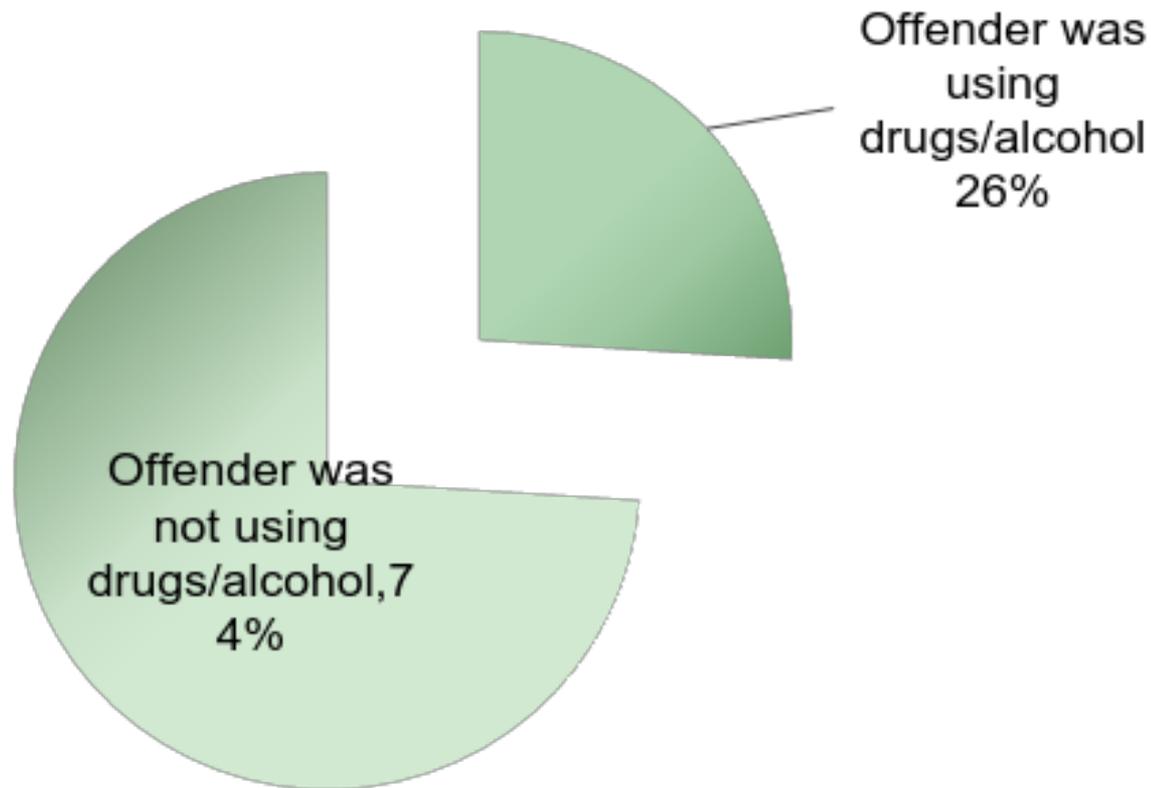


# Substance Abuse Issues

---

- Domestic relations court
- Juvenile court
- Involuntary commitment
- Civil court
- Criminal Court

# Over 1/4 of violence victims report offender was under the influence of drugs or alcohol



# Vote with your feet...

- Guidelines to remember:
  - Everyone has their own perspective
  - Reasonable people can disagree
- Categories:
  - Strongly Agree
  - Agree
  - Neutral
  - Disagree
  - Strongly Disagree

# Statement #1

---

- Drug use is a voluntary behavior, not a disease, especially after long periods of abstinence.

# Statement #2

---

- It is more important for a substance-abusing offender to get a job than attend substance abuse treatment.

# Statement #3

---

- Criminal behavior of the substance-abusing offender is due to drugs or alcohol.

# Statement #4

---

- The threat of probation revocation or brief periods of incarceration are important tools to facilitate substance abuse treatment.

# Statement #5

---

- Children are usually only affected by a parent's substance abuse in cases of physical abuse.

*There's not a drug  
on Earth that can  
make life meaningful.*



*Recovery: It will be challenging.  
It will also be worth it.  
You will relapse, and that's ok,  
as long as you keep fighting.*



Fear Guilt & Anger will be sent to  
make us back down



When we practice a habit we give it life  
When we practice a new habit we have  
a battle

If we allow our feelings to dictate our actions we will never mount an attack to give anything else power.



Do we really expect the world to make us happy?  
The North Wind made us Vikings.  
A life of ease and leisure will make us neither  
good or happy.  
Happiness is not mostly pleasure it is mostly  
victory.



What is victory? It is being connected and  
protected. And where do we connect?  
Our broken parts are where we connect.

*Where do we connect?*

From our spiritual platform.

What is our spiritual Platform built on?

- ❖ Choice
- ❖ Risk
- ❖ Relationships
- ❖ Awe



There is always a **choice** in how we respond but not necessarily what happens



“Hope is definitely not the same thing as optimism. It is not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the certainty that something makes sense, regardless of how it turns out.” --*Havel*

**Risk** is like being skeet.

We don't say "He got shot down some or he got shot down much."



What we often do is compare ourselves with others or our own highlight reel.

# Relationships

This is where our growth occurs



# Relationships

This is where our growth occurs



# AWE



NASA

