

# "I'M A PRETTY LUCKY GUY"

By Dr. Herby Bell

**Somebody famous once said, "Most men die at age 40 but aren't buried until they're 90." I resonate with the startling quote because a variation of it was true for me.**

At the age of 40, I began the long journey back from active addiction to return to a truly living, productive and joyful life. In retrospect, I never knew what hit me as it relates to developing the brain disorder and disease of addiction but I had all of the risk factors.

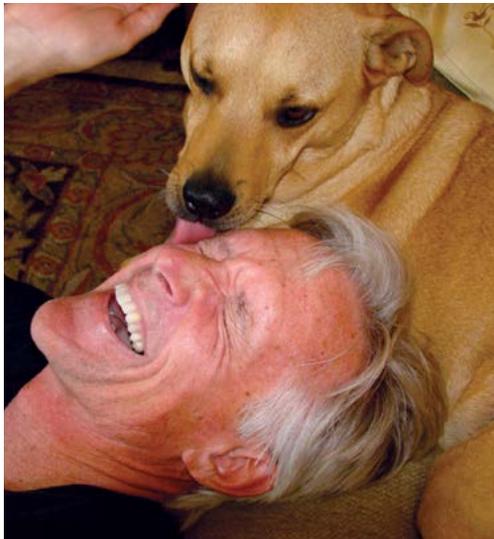
The risks for addiction are clear and agreed upon by addiction professionals:

- A genetic predisposition (runs in the family?)
- Childhood trauma including physical, emotional, sexual
- Family/social patterns
- Age of first using substance/behavior
- Mental disorders (anxiety, depression, etc.)

**Once surrendering to the truth** about my life, i.e., having addiction due to many causes including my own initiating and promoting it, I became interested in learning all I could to get well and stay well.

Now, at the age of 60, I look back and understand that's what it was always about—staying well. The problem was: I did not know how to do it.

What addiction recovery has taught me is that if I'm not eating, moving, thinking, feeling and sleeping well one day at a time...I'm not well and an accident or infirmity waiting to happen. And as it turns out, addiction or not, these are the essential "nutrients" for wellness for anyone who wants it.



Dr. Herby Bell and best friend

So I began to study and embark upon what I call, "the experiment of one." I had to find out what worked for me as I stayed open to suggestions and examples of good health I was attracted to. Goodness knows the media changes its mind/course with the wind when it comes to giving wellness advice. If it was to be... it was/is up to me.

My personal studies have brought me to these very doable and actionable ways of being with my desire to be active for the duration of my, "one day at a time."

**No one of these areas or "nutrients"** as I like to call them can compensate for another. My wellness practices are synergistic in nature. The sum total is greater than its parts. And a funny, not-so-coincidental thing...I don't get sick anymore. I really don't.

My mantra has become, "long-term addiction recovery is equal to long-term wellness practices." Nobody gets out alive as the old saying goes but as I discovered a little late in the game, all of us have a self-regulating and self-healing mind, body and spirit if we'll just give them the essential nutrients they need for a long, healthy life.

## Keeping It Simple Is The Key And It Looks Like This:

- **Eating well** – just eat real food. Move away from sugar, refined, fast and processed foods and toward nutrient dense, whole foods. Plenty of good plain water.
- **Moving well** – do something every day. Lift something heavy a couple of days/week. And every 7 to 10 days, rev it up—sprint, cycle, surf, swim—to my relative and healthy capacity.
- **Thinking well** – engage my mind: reading, puzzling, journaling, attending lectures and giving lectures. Engage in critical thinking and evocative conversation regularly.
- **Feeling well** – continue to work on my emotional intelligence. Attention to my marriage and family relationships, my men's group and other support groups, community/mindfulness/spiritual practices, laughing and crying regularly.
- **Sleeping well** – honoring my sleeping environment and natural, go-to-bed and get up times.

*Dr. Herby Bell owns and operates Recovery Health Care, a recovery and wellness coaching practice in Saratoga, CA. He speaks regularly at local addiction recovery treatment centers, high schools, community colleges and service groups on the topics of addiction recovery, wellness and brain health. Herby also produces the critically acclaimed podcast, Sober Conversations on iTunes. His contact information may be found at [RecoveryHealthCare.me](http://RecoveryHealthCare.me).*