

bread for the journey

Truth

They never saw it coming.

Scott and Jean Adam were successful retirees. They decided to do more with their retirement than simply look out the window and shout obscenities at their neighbor's dog that happened to have meandered onto their manicured lawn. They wanted to spend their sunset years doing more than tend to the lovely rose garden out back and make the monthly obligatory visits to their children and grandchildren who were altogether relieved when the long weekend with the old folks was finally over and everyone could return to the normal rhythm of their chaotic lives.

The Adam family weren't the world's greatest do-gooders even though they did pack their 58-foot sailing sloop with Bibles to be distributed to folks they met along the way. Scott and Jean Adam decided to sail the world. And they were well on their way to fulfilling all their dreams until Somalian pirates intervened and took them hostage. After four unsuccessful days of negotiations with the US Navy, the pirate crew eventually killed them in cold blood.

They never saw it coming. Imagine. You are sailing the ocean blue. The seas are calm enough and the breeze is brisk enough to allow for a terrific sailing day. The Adams were laughing and chattering together with friends from Seattle who joined them on their adventure, maybe sipping their morning coffee and munching on a warm frosted sweet roll. All was right with the world. The skies were as blue as blue can get. Puffy clouds dotted the monotonous grandeur of blue after blue after blue. It truly doesn't get any better than this. Freedom, friends and fresh air.

Suddenly, out of nowhere, Scott Adam saw a shadow looming out of the north and west. The shadow began to take shape. The radar confirmed it as the alien craft came closer. The speeding boat took on an ominous hue. It wasn't the Navy checking on their well-being. It was a pirate ship. Suddenly, it was on them and more than a dozen pirates were invading their private, precious but now precarious space. Their lives as they knew them were over. In the flash of a wrinkle in time. Imagine that. One moment it was heaven. The next it was hell.

Truth has a way of exploding in our face. We never see it coming.

Linda Moore says she is in the market for a new set of parents for her daughter. Linda is a single mom who has been given six months to come up with a replacement. "Half a year," they said. "Yes, we are certain," they said. "Very sorry," they said. "No, no hope," they said. "None at all," they said. "Put your affairs in order. Enjoy what is left," they said. None of them said, "We could be wrong." All that they could manage to muster was, "These things happen." Linda never saw it coming.

We never see it coming. Maybe we refuse to see it. Accidents. Dreadful diagnosis. Addiction. Warrants. Bankruptcy. Divorce. Termination. The finality of certain truths explodes in our face. And our lives are irreversibly changed. Or, over.

Well, the truth of the matter is that our lives are not over. Not yet, anyway. Not if you are reading this. Life is still waiting. Yes, we, all of us, young or old have had to face hard truths over the course of our years:

You can't live here any more. You must leave. You can't come home again.

(continued on back)

The relationship is over: "I have found another. You never were right for me."

Your insurance does not cover this. Who is going to pay for this bill?

And, this one just kills us: "You cannot use this drug or any drug any more. It no longer works for you." We cannot get high enough to cover our pain and we find it necessary to escape and forget. The truth explodes in our face. When rigorous honesty is required of us, what do we do?

We tend to hide not in the shelter of the Almighty but in the cave of our last refuge: denial. The lie. We run helter-skelter back and forth in a panic between telling lies to living a lie because we don't want to deal with the truth; we are afraid we cannot bear up under the scrutiny of the truth. It seems easier to fabricate, minimize, cut a corner or a deal, shade it, spin it, schmooze and tell only bits and pieces of the truth. Feign integrity and pretend to be honest—or be selectively honest. Vulgar humor—gallows laughter is what it is. Run. Change the subject. Blame others. Blame God.

Anything but the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Why? We are afraid what "they" might think of us. It is easier to tell

a lie than to face the music, the glare of disapproval, the condemnation, the corrections, the rehab, the inconvenience of recovery, and the shallow excitement of living on the edge of constant mayhem. We say "they" can't handle the truth when in fact it is we who refuse to handle it. We refuse to believe in the deep truth of an ancient proverb, "Bread gained by deceit is sweet; but afterward our mouth is filled with gravel." (Proverbs 20:17)

"Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path. Those who do not recover are men and women who refuse to give themselves completely to this simple program, usually men and women who are constitutionally incapable of being honest with themselves ... they are incapable of developing a manner of living which requires rigorous honesty." (Page 58, Alcoholics Anonymous)

Tell the truth. Be the truth. Live the truth. The truth shall set you free. Still true.

It's the way we do treatment at Rosecrance. It's how we teach recovery. 



The Rev. Dr. William Lenters, Chaplain

Rosecrance offers the best opportunity for lasting recovery for adolescents, adults and their families. If you know someone who needs help, please call us at 815.391.1000 or 888.9 AT LAST. www.rosecrance.org.

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Rosecrance Health Network
1021 North Mulford Road
Rockford, IL 61107



is a bi-monthly news and views letter from Rev. Dr. William Lenters, Chaplain at Rosecrance Treatment Centers. Bread for the Journey is written on behalf of people who live with addictions. Together, and by God's grace, we will try to make a difference.

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