

## The fear

My name is Muralidhar and what would you like to know about me?

I am an alcoholic and that love for that substance is so great that in front of that nobody stands.

My wife was sitting in front of me. When I opened my eyes, it was morning 4 o'clock and I asked what happened.

Then my wife said "Look at your head."

When I touched my head, there was a bandage and I said "What happened?"

She said "You had an accident. You were drunk."

And that was the first lie I told her. I said "I will not drink again in future."

I am an alcoholic and addicted and because of this addiction, I have ruined my life and also that of my family and my loved ones and there came a position where I could not do anything about my life and I went into such a state of loneliness and shame and I did not have anybody. I could not drink. I could not eat. I could not do anything and I just wanted to live.

At that time, somebody helped me and put me in a rehabilitation center where I went through the program of recovery.

I am recovering, rather. I am in recovery because there is nothing like "recovered." After many years, today, I am here as a voluntary staff.

I help this center with the other patients' recovery and today, I am really happy doing this because I can at least help and see that the others who come here do not suffer the same way what I have suffered.

So, I feel today that it is God's will for me that I have been fortunate enough to be given this opportunity to serve my fellow addicts.

Me, when I was born, actually I was brought up by my grandmother because my father had died and my mother had remarried and she had gone away with my stepfather.

So, I was handed over to my grandmother immediately after birth, I was living with my grandmother and my aunt, and after 5 years, when my parents came back to take me, I actually was very surprised and I could not go with them because I thought my aunt and my uncle were my mother and father.

So, it was difficult for me, and at that age of 5, I just could not come to the fact and accept that he was my father and I always had that fear and I always lived in that fear. Fear of what?

I don't know; it was maybe fear of the unknown, fear of being rejected, fear of not being accepted.

Maybe, my ego was coming there.

I did not want to show other people that I am afraid.

So, it was again my ego and I always depended too much on my mother who was helpless at that time sometimes because she also could not take side many times.

But then, I had very good relatives and friends who made up for whatever I lost at home, and that way, I started getting myself separated from my family. I used to always be outside. I used to be with my relatives. I used to be with my friends.

So, I lost that personal touch with my family.

I could never understand them.

Maybe, I did not want to understand them also; I do not know what was that fear which kept nagging me always Emotionally, I am weak.

Till the age I started alcohol, as I told you, I was living in fear, in ego, in denial and in lying.

I will give you one example.

When I was in school, four of our friends got together and I said "We will go for a movie on Saturday." So, they all agreed. I said "OK." So, when I was going home, the fear in me was "If I ask my father and he rejects, what will happen?

How will I face my friends?"

So, what I did – when I went home, I went and told my mother that "Saturday, we are doing combined studies in my friend's house."

It is a small thing, but see my thinking – because of that fear of rejection and the fear of letting my ego and pride down because I was a big shot there.

I said “Eh! We are all going for a movie.”

And then, if Murali comes and says “I cannot come” means my ego gets hurt which I could not stand.

You can see that disease of mind working.

Then, I went home. I told my mother.

She told “Ok. No problem. Studies, know.

Yes, go.” And then, I needed money.

So, what I did - next day morning, when I saw my father going to bath, I took his wallet, took the money required, put it in my pocket and I was happy.

Now, I got the money and I got the permission – no problem. I did not want to do the hard way where I might face rejection. I wanted things to happen.

When I decide something, it should happen.

So, I arranged everything in such a way illegally that it happened.

So, I got the money, I got the permission.

Saturday, we all met in the morning.

Then, I asked one friend. He said “No Murali. I cannot come.”

“Why, what happened?”

“No, my parents said we are going out somewhere else that day evening. We have to go to some other function.

So, they said “I cannot go, you can go some other day.” “OK.”

The other guy said “I also cannot come.”

“Why? What happened?” “No, My parents’ family is going for the same movie, Murali.

So, they asked me to come with them.” I said “Fine.” Third guy said “Yeah! Come, we will go. What happened?”

I said “I asked my mother. She said OK. She gave me the money. Come, let us go.” You see the difference between these four. We are normal. They did the normal thing.

They went and asked the parents in a normal way.

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I started with beer. Within 1 year at that age, 10 to 12 bottles of beer a day I used to have.

In the beginning, I felt as if I was on top of the world; as if I could face anything, anybody; I could talk anywhere, anything; I could go through anything, like I was the king and everybody listened to me. So, that was a great feeling. I thought this was something which, you know...

So far, I had lived in that fear and I could not come out and I was always shy. I could not speak to girls because I had that fear of rejection.

Anytime, suppose I talk to her and suppose she rejects me, you know – I could not take that. So, I would not go because of that fear, but once I dragged, I had that courage and I used to go and do. What I never used to do, I went and did it. So, when I did that, I had tremendous confidence on this substance. I thought this is what is making me a man.

When I had fear, I always went into a shell or I covered it with my ego; you know, something like this. I always would not accept reality and would not accept what people said. I always had my own view of everything. I thought what I did was right and what I am doing is right and everybody else is wrong

If I would have changed one thing.

I have given trouble to a lot of people, to loved ones. One thing that I think today is - if I could help it, I would not have given them that trouble. That's all. Otherwise, my life has been an experience which today I think God has put me into it because that is the experience today which I am able to give to the boys who come.

That is the experience which helps the boys today. I don't have to teach. I don't have to preach or anything.

Today, it is something I can give them which I have, which I had, which I underwent, which I suffered, which I have gone through, the pain I have taken, the pain I have given.

All these things I think are a treasure for me today.