We All Fall Down

I made it through Black Party weekend sober, but a bigger temptation awaited.

February 25, 2019 By Richard JMV

The lengths I once went to for art and passion seemed like such worthy and necessary pursuits at the time. I would drink and I would drug to make myself think I was creating something so brilliant when in reality I was blocking the best parts of me from surfacing. That was all starting to change the more time I was staying sober.

The Nutcracker changed me in 2014. It forced me to take on new and bigger roles. I pushed myself to be great. And I learned that I could accomplish so much if I was willing to take suggestions and make changes. My newfound perspective opened many doors for me to see new views. I could look at challenging situations with a readiness to understand. People weren't as bad as they had seemed, and I could accept myself and others as they were, or so I thought.

There was a guy I had been talking to for a while in the beginning of 2015. I thought Mr. Man had taught me the hard lesson of not dating in the first year of sobriety, but truth be told, I wasn't the type to learn from the first time. I needed to learn the hard way.

Let me start by saying that everyone I dated in the first year or two of sobriety was usually someone who was unavailable. Take this one for example: Yes, he was sexy, but he lived across the Atlantic Ocean. We could only talk at certain hours of the day, and we barely saw each other. When we did see each other, he was often on his phone, distracted by others and checking social media. It was like he never appreciated what was right in front of him because he was so focused on where he could be or what he could be doing and who he could be doing it with.

There we sat at dinner, a yummy steak and great lighting to set the mood, but his head was somewhere else. I was trying to convince him of why we should invest in each other. So I did what I thought I had to do to keep a man interested at the time—and it was to have sex. I knew that was going to happen at the end of the date no matter what.

I guess in my own way, I was acting sort of like him. I was clinging onto the idea of what he could be instead of seeing what he actually was. Could it be because I thought I was someone that I wasn't? Maybe.

We rolled around in the dark trying to find positions that worked for us. Not many did. It was our first time having sex, and it felt like a disaster. Him wearing a condom freaked me out because I was still newly sober and thought sex should only be bareback at that point. It's what I wanted, to

be that connected with someone. And for London and me, I felt we needed to connect further or not at all.

After we finished, I left. Before our date, I thought this guy could be someone very special. But when I left the date, I felt no spark at all. The rest of his stay in New York was awkward with his drinking a lot around me and my noticing his inability to commit, at least to me. His flirtation toward others aroused jealousy, and I had to admit it to myself: This wasn't the one.

Weeks went by when we were friendly via text and over the phone, but I didn't feel anything except resentment. I had expectations of who he was going to be, and I was let down. I was still going to my meetings, and my sponsor suggested that I had a thing for men who are unavailable. I hated the thought that he could see right through me and tell me what was happening in each and every situation. I didn't want to listen, but I did anyway. So I didn't worry about dating for a bit and started focusing on my sobriety more.

And as March rolled around in 2015, I was feeling triggered by an annual fetish, circuit party here in New York City called Black Party. I used to love going to Black Party, dressing in fetish gear or even being naked, having sex and doing drugs wherever I wanted and feeling free. Of course, now I know I was really trapped. This year, I made a promise to myself and my sponsor that I wouldn't go. All weekend I judged those who went and I was upset that I didn't have anyone to have sex with or cuddle with because they were all at that party. I went to more meetings and shared about my resentments and disgust. What was I disgusted with? Was it that I was feeling shame for how I had acted for years when I attended this party?

I stayed sober the entire weekend, no sex or drugs, just work and home, the gym and movies. I white-knuckled it through the weekend, and then on Monday, March 23, 2015, I woke up and checked Facebook and found out that London had a boyfriend now. The news had me fuming and feeling crazy. It sent me in a downward spiral. I got on my apps and logged into websites where I sought out meth. I wanted it and needed it to make my head stop spinning. I called my sponsor to let him know I was picking up my old bad habits. Soon, after chatting with another guy online, I figured out where I'd go for my needs. I hopped in the shower, got dressed and headed for the train. Powered with fury and resentment, I was about to fall into a hole so deep that I might be able to climb out.

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