

Courage to Change

Enhancing Lifelong Recovery and Personal Growth



I am growing to like myself again

Not so long ago I could hardly be bothered to crawl out of bed. When I did, I preferred to just pad about in my slippers and pajamas. I had little interest in myself or the world.

But I've come a long way in recovery. Today I popped out of bed right with the alarm. I made my bed and then put on my favorite pants and T-shirt. While brushing my hair in the mirror--surprise!--I broke into a smile. *I felt good about myself--I felt good about the way I looked and about how I was starting my day.*

Today I will practice smiling at myself in the mirror twice (even if I do not feel like it).

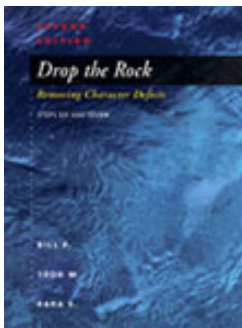
--From *Today I Will Do One Thing* by Tim Mc

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Ask the Expert



Some people who start working Step Six wonder, "How do I remove my 'defects of character'?"

The Sixth Step is the perfectly logical place to be after having completed a thorough Fifth Step. Asking ourselves, "Do I want to give this (defect) up?" is different than asking, "Do I want to be different?"

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News and Notes

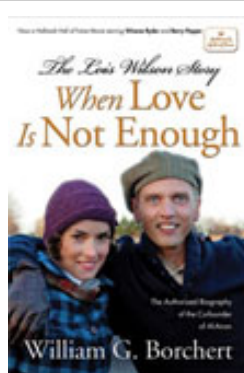
Tune into CBS on Sunday, April 25, at 9 p. m. ET/8 p.m. CT to watch Winona Ryder in *When Love Is Not Enough: The Lois Wilson Story*, based on the [Hazelden book](#).

Recommended Reading



Meditations

A Story of Hope



When Love Is Not Enough

Despondent about her husband's drinking and the devastating effect it has had on their lives, Lois Wilson wonders, "When will it end?" in this excerpt from *The Lois Wilson Story: When Love Is Not Enough*, soon to be a *Hallmark Hall of Fame*

Spiritual Reflection



Getting Through Life's Most Difficult Times

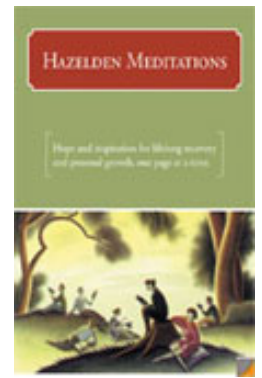
The Grief Club is Melody Beattie's profoundly personal, powerfully healing book to help readers through life's most difficult times. Part memoir, part self-help book, part journalism, *The Grief Club* is a book of stories bound

movie on CBS.

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together by the human experience of loss in its many forms such as death, divorce, drug addiction, and the tumultuous yet tender process of recovery. It's a book you need to read and share.

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When Love Is Not Enough

Despondent about her husband's drinking and the devastating effect it has had on their lives, Lois Wilson wonders, "When will it end?" in this excerpt from *The Lois Wilson Story: When Love Is Not Enough*, soon to be a *Hallmark Hall of Fame* movie on CBS.

The wind was whipping the rain against the kitchen windows. Lois sat at the white cast-iron table bobbing the tea bag in her cup and staring down at the vegetable sandwich she had thrown together on whole wheat bread. If only Mother were here now, she thought. How much time there would be just to talk, to get things out, to listen to her pearls of wisdom cultured from years of experience and a deep faith in her God. Matilda Burnham was a kind, loving soul who had great and usually very practical insight. It was she who told her daughter that Bill was sick, that his craving for drink was the devil's curse, and that God Himself must find a way to shake it from him. But in the meantime, if Lois truly loved her husband, she must do everything in her power to help him, to pray for him, to encourage him to seek the Lord.

Lois believed Bill truly loved her mother. At least he always said so and showed her great respect and consideration when he was sober. But then why wasn't he there when she died? Why wasn't he there for her funeral? Why didn't he express much deeper regret and remorse four days later when Lois bailed him out of the drunk tank once again? She knew what her mother would have said. A man who does this kind of terrible thing to a wife and family he loves has to be a very sick man who needs a great deal of love and help himself.

But how far must one go? How far do you let a man drag you down, force you to wallow in the muck he brings home? Did her mother really understand what she had gone through? What she was still going through? Her father, on the other hand, would just as soon have Lois leave Bill. "You can't help this man anymore," he would half-shout at her each time Bill roared off on another spree. . . .

. . . Soon, however, Dr. Burnham and his wife-to-be would be moving into their own place, and at least that source of household tension would come to an end. But then who would help her, she thought, when Bill made another of his feeble attempts to stop drinking on his own and began to shake and sweat? Who would inject him, as her father frequently did, with a strong sedative or give him a dose of that horrible smelling paraldehyde to calm his tremors?

Then again, maybe she was worried for absolutely no reason. The way things were going, Lois felt almost certain she would get a call one night and learn that Bill had been found dead in the streets, hit by a car, beaten to death, or dead from an overdose of liquor. Such tragedies were in the newspapers every day. Every single day. She grabbed her forehead and wished her mind would stop racing like this. Lois glanced at the kitchen clock. It was almost a quarter to eight. Perhaps she'd take a hot bath and then start that new Somerset Maugham novel that had been on her night table for weeks. . . .

It was well past midnight when Lois came to with a start. A loud noise from downstairs had awakened her. The bedside lamp was still on, and the novel she had been reading lay across her chest. She sat up and listened. Then she heard another noise, like something being pushed across a carpet, followed by those familiar grunts and groans and loud curse words. She didn't have to hear anything more to know that her husband had finally arrived home, and in his usual condition.

Lois slipped out of bed, put her bathrobe back on, and walked slowly down the stairs to the entrance hall. Bill was lying halfway into the parlor. He had knocked over a lamp table, broken the shade and bulb, and was reaching for a nearby chair to pull himself erect. The trouble was, each time he clutched at it, he pushed the chair further away. His "goddams" and "Jesus Christs" were getting louder as his frustration grew. Lois switched on the hallway light to see better. What she saw was nothing worse than usual, but the brighter light stunned her husband momentarily and made him fall back down on his side.

He looked up at her. Bill, too, was soaking wet. There was a cut and several scrapes on his face, his nose was running, and saliva drooled from his mouth, across his chin. That terrible stench of cheap booze filled her nostrils. Suddenly she watched as her husband reached his arm up toward her, smiled that stupid drunken smile, and mumbled in a hoarse whisper: "There's my lady. She's always there. Come on, Pal. Give your boy a big kiss."

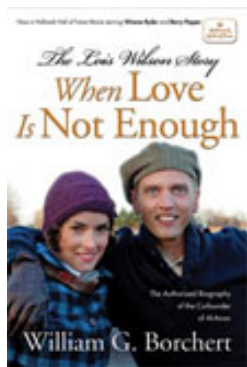
The shame and revulsion from the incident at the pharmacy, the pounding headache she had suffered all day long, the ever-present pain of losing her mother, and now looking down and seeing the Bowery being dragged into her home once again--it all seemed to strike her at once. She couldn't hold back. Lois later recalled slumping to her knees, leaning over her husband, and pounding him on the chest and arms, lightly at first, then harder and harder. She grew hysterical, saying, "I lie for you. I cover up for you. I can't even look my own father in the face because of you. Every time you get drunk, I'm the one who feels guilty. Like it's my fault. Because I couldn't have children. That I'm not a good enough wife. But it's not my fault! It's not my fault! You can go to your bootleggers, your speakeasies. Where can I go? Tell me! Where can I go?"

The next thing she recalled saying haunted her for some time after that. In fact, Lois said, it haunted her right up until the day Bill finally found sobriety in Towns Hospital and began to get well.

"I thought tonight," she recalled shouting through her tears, "that maybe I would never see you again. But you don't even have the decency to die."

Excerpted from *The Lois Wilson Story*, by William G. Borchert.

Tune into CBS on Sunday, April 25, at 9 p.m. ET/8 p.m. CT to watch Winona Ryder in *When Love Is Not Enough: The Lois Wilson Story*, based on the Hazelden book. [link "Hazelden Book" to the product page for *The Lois Wilson Story*.]



[The Lois Wilson Story When Love Is Not Enough](#)

Softcover, 424 pages

Now a Hallmark Hall of Fame special, *The Lois Wilson Story: When Love Is Not Enough* is the biography of the cofounder of Al-Anon and wife of AA cofounder Bill W.

Item 2603

List price: \$15.95

Online price: \$14.35

[return to top](#)

Getting Through Life's Most Difficult Times

The Grief Club is Melody Beattie's profoundly personal, powerfully healing book to help readers through life's most difficult times. Part memoir, part self-help book, part journalism, *The Grief Club* is a book of stories bound together by the human experience of loss in its many forms such as death, divorce, drug addiction, and the tumultuous yet tender process of recovery. It's a book you need to read and share.

The doctors walk into the room, a room quiet except for the whooshing sound coming from the machines forcing air into my twelve-year-old son's lungs. "It's an illusion," a doctor says. "He's not alive. His brain died days ago. Your son is gone."

"There's hope," I say.

"No, there isn't," the doctors say back.

You're wrong, I think. *There's always hope--isn't there?* At least there was until now.

"You've got until one o'clock this morning to say your good-byes," another doctor, a woman, says. "Then we're shutting down the machines."

Conversation over. No options are offered to me. I go into the family room created for the people doing vigil with my daughter, my ex-husband, and me. I pick up the Bible. *I'll read where the pages open*, I think. *I'll get a sign. I've gotten messages that way before*. The pages fall open in my hands. I read under my thumb. It's the story of how Jesus brings Lazarus back from the dead. Even if I won't admit it, I know the truth. This isn't a sign. It might mean something, but I don't know what it is.

I go back into the intensive-care room. People filter in to tell Shane good-bye. When they finish, I hold Shane in my arms. He's covered with bandages, hooked up to tubes. A nurse turns off the machines. The whooshing noise stops. I hear one faint sound. It's Shane exhaling his last breath. A nurse rests her hand on my shoulder. "It's going to take a long time. Eight years at least," she said. "It's going to be hard, but you'll get through it. I know. My daughter died when she was nine."

All I can think is, *I don't want to be like her--have a dead child. I don't want to go through this. Somebody made a mistake.*

It takes years to understand the meaning of that brief conversation: I had been welcomed to the club.

Excerpted from *The Grief Club* by Melody Beattie.



[*The Grief Club*](#)

The Secret to Getting Through All Kinds of Change
Softcover, 368 pages

The Grief Club is Melody Beattie's profoundly personal, powerfully healing book to help readers through life's most difficult times. Part memoir, part self-help book, part journalism, *The Grief Club* is a book of stories bound together by the human experience of loss in its many forms such as death, divorce, drug addiction, and the tumultuous yet tender process of recovery. It's a book you need to read and share.

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List price: \$14.95

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[return to top](#)

Some people who start working Step Six wonder, "How do I remove my 'defects of character'?"

The Sixth Step is the perfectly logical place to be after having completed a thorough Fifth Step. Asking ourselves, "Do I want to give this (defect) up?" is different than asking, "Do I want to be different?"

Regardless of what little I know about "being different," I must first ask, "Am I willing to believe that I can be different?" It is important to remember that Step Six doesn't say, "Become entirely ready to make myself different." It says, "Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character." God, not me, makes me different by giving me what it takes to change. It is my job to act and behave like the change has occurred. In doing this, the process of change happens. Frequently this involves emotional pain; **the pain of living the way I have been becomes greater than the fear of change**. It also involves the pain of attracting seemingly obnoxious people. These folks are mirrors of my defects. I get to experience how it feels to have the shoe on the other foot.

This is a Step of surrender and trust, not self-will or self-determination. We surrender our ideas of which defects stand in the way of our **usefulness** to God, ourselves, and others.

Billy O. once gave me this example: "At a recovery convention, someone I sponsor approached me to talk about a problem he was having. His mom was at the same convention, and he was unable to 'deal' with it. He needed to talk to me about talking to her. I was practicing my defect of lust and enjoying being distracted by looking for available women. I blew him off. He ended up talking to his mom. I believe that God used my defect of lust to keep me unavailable to eliminate the middleman. The kid went straight to the source and used the tools he had to talk to his mom. This reminds me, how do I know when I'm being defective?"

God uses our defects and our assets in many ways to accomplish His will.

Is there a "fast track" to spiritual perfection or progress? It is important to get over and beyond the false pride of making "getting rid of character defects" a central focus of our lives. This approach is just one more way of not living life on life's terms. We get into life and do the best we can with what we know. When we truly *know* better, we are willing to change. In the meantime, we live life.

The hardest aspect of Step Six is controlling nature. I need to accept being *human* and *fallible*. Self-acceptance is more important than self-abuse. I cannot abuse myself into spirituality by shaming and ridiculing myself. I cannot open a flower with a sledgehammer--only God opens flowers. In Step Six, I must trust that Step Seven follows.

Excerpted from *Drop the Rock: Removing Character Defects* by Bill P., Todd W., and Sara S.



[Drop the Rock, Second Edition](#)

Removing Character Defects--Steps Six and Seven
Softcover, 132 pages

Resentment. Fear. Self-Pity. Intolerance. Anger. As Bill P. explains, these are the "rocks" that can sink recovery--or at the least, block further progress. Based on the principles behind Steps Six and Seven, *Drop the Rock* combines personal stories, practical advice, and powerful insights to help readers move forward in recovery. The second edition features additional stories and a reference section.

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Online price: \$12.55

[return to top](#)