

## Lighting the Way

I have seen it all.

I am the one who knows all the stories. How do I know it all? I am the first thing they see when they open their eyes. Heavy with exhaustion and weariness, I can see sweat beading on their foreheads and concern in their eyes. Some look up at me and think they have died and gone to heaven. I can see the anguish wash over them as they begin to comprehend the harm they have caused to those they love.

These are husbands missing their families, mothers who have lost their children and families ripped apart. Lost people recounting endless stories of the trouble they have caused, laws they have broken and lives they have wrecked. Despite what you may think, I can tell you that these aren't bad people.

I consider myself lucky. Even though I see them arrive worn down, beaten by a senseless disease that does not discriminate, I am the privileged one who sees them heal and recover. And they do! As for those who lie beneath me, I try to comfort them and show them warmth until they are able to love themselves again. I try to be their light until life returns to their eyes.

That is the miracle of all of this, that despite their brokenness, hopelessness and heartache, they can recover. I see it daily, time and time again. Truth be told, I have seen it for over forty years in thousands of people. I have seen some of the most hopeless cases recover, beginning with those who first brought me home.

These two were a sad case. A beautiful woman named Dot and her brilliant, well-respected husband Dr. John. My early days with them were great. They were so in love and their lives were full of promise. He was a well-respected surgeon in town and she was the pulse of the family. Everyone loved them. I actually felt privileged to be part of such a wonderful family. With all of my beauty and the way people marveled at me, I thought we were a natural fit. Late into the evening, they would enjoy hours of merriment in my glow. But over time, the joy and laughter turned dark. The happiness started to go, and I watched their lives fall apart. They were the first I saw stricken with this awful disease, a sort of soul sickness that masquerades as a fun, more enriched way of life.

This disease took these happy people from me. I saw their love turn to sadness, their joy to grief, and as I watched, I wondered what would come of them, and me, in this home with no life. Even though they still looked the same, they were only a shell of their former selves and even my light did not seem as bright.

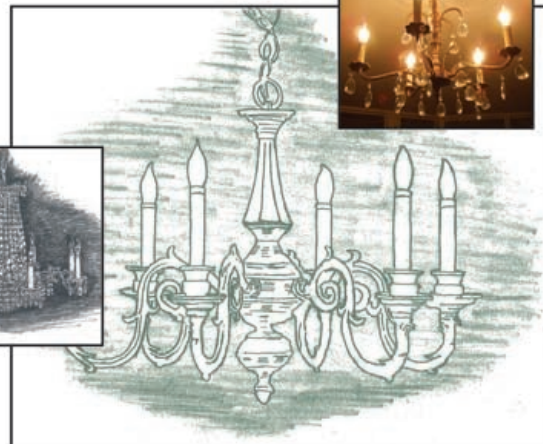
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Chandelier





## 10 Tips for Maintaining Sobriety This Holiday Season

The Holiday Season is upon us! If your calendar looks like everyone else's, it's filled with invitations galore to parties and festivities that involve eating and drinking. Alcohol is flowing generously and if you are one of the hundreds of thousands of recovering alcoholics in this country, the time of merriment and good cheer between Thanksgiving & New Year's Day can pose extreme challenges for staying sober.

Here are some holiday survival strategies from Willingway to get you through the party season serene and sober:

1. Increase support from your circle of sober friends. Attend extra 12-Step Meetings. Be sure to communicate with your support group as this will help to keep you accountable.
2. If your holiday plans take you out of town, the first thing you should do is find the nearest 12-step group. Make a commitment to attend a meeting when you are out of town.
3. If you are invited to a dinner party where they will be serving alcohol, plan to arrive just before dinner so you can miss cocktail hour. Pay close attention to relapse triggers and remember H.A.L.T.: hungry, angry, lonely, tired. You will want to get plenty of rest, eat well and have a healthy support system in place. Check ahead of time with the host/hostess to see if any of the food is going to be prepared with alcohol so that you can take extra precautions to avoid those dishes.
4. Take your own vehicle so you can leave early if needed. Also, take a sober companion with you to a party for extra support. Schedule a meeting with your sponsor, a sponsee or another sober friend so you can leave at a reasonable time. Have someone text or tweet you during the party so you can check in.
5. If there are strained family issues or relationships, limit the amount of time with your extended family. Significant ongoing family issues can create or exacerbate potential for relapse.
6. If you know you are going to a party that has alcohol, plan ahead. For instance, if you have an office party with an open bar, sit across the room from the bar area or socialize in another room away from the main bar area. Have a soda or another non-alcoholic drink in your hand so there will be a decreased chance of someone offering you an alcoholic drink. Try to use a can, bottle or a marked cup to prevent drink mix-ups.
7. Reflect upon the reason the event is being held in the first place. Is it Thanksgiving, Christmas, Hanukkah, or New Years that's being celebrated? Think about the meaning of the event. (This can apply to birthday parties, baby showers and weddings too.) Are we there for the food & drinks?? No... we are there to celebrate the lives of others along with the holiday or special occasion. We celebrate relationships today. We go to build relationships, make new ones and re-kindle old ones if we choose to.
8. Being of service to the host or hostess (or guest at the party) is always a great way to get outside of ourselves (away from our self-centeredness) and to think about others. This most always helps the uneasiness or anxiousness we get when immersed in this type of setting.
9. Make sure to participate in recovery-based holiday activities. Create new traditions. Host your own sober holiday party with friends that choose not to drink, recovering friends and their families. Get involved in your community. Take toys to local children in need. Prepare meals for shut-ins, volunteer with your church or any local non-profit organizations.
10. Remember that sobriety should be your number one priority! Most holiday parties are optional. If you are uncomfortable attending, you can always say, "No!"

(Cover story continued)

And then, it got better. Dr. John and Dot got better.

They seemed to find help for this horrible disease – a solution that restored their life. Countless others followed them and I looked down upon this all. At first I was stunned, and then I came to understand. The Mooneys began helping others – who were just like themselves – get better. I heard talk of a Higher Power and a spiritual way of life. I heard our guests discuss all the wrong they had done and how they were prepared to make it right. I then saw love – so much love – shared from one person to another.

After that, my room was renamed. It was no longer the dining room. The table was removed and beds were put in its place. They named the room after me and I was to serve a new purpose. For all those who looked up at me, shaking in their beds, scared and hopeless, I was to remind them of exactly what I had witnessed. I was to remind them of the promise of home – a home where people love you unconditionally. And as they opened their eyes, they would hopefully realize that they were not bad people – only sick people who could get better.

From that day on, I have lit the way through the day and during long nights. I have seen this cunning disease try to claim souls and destroy lives. Although I will never be in a grand ballroom, I have had a higher calling. I will be their light until they find their own. I will see it all. This disease of addiction will not prevail.

For I am the Willingway Chandelier. ﷲ

### About the Story:

Since the mid 1960s, thousands of individuals who have come through Willingway's doors are all connected by one thing: the chandelier. The chandelier has been around since Dr. John & Dot Mooney first started sobering up alcoholics in their Lee Street Home. The chandelier now graces the detoxification unit of Willingway. It stands as a reminder of their mission and continues to light the way for the still suffering alcoholics and addicts. No matter your walk of life or circumstances, it is universal to us all. It serves as a reminder of Willingway's humble beginnings and also as a symbol to all Willingway alumni that we can recover, friends and loved ones can get better and we should continue to carry this message of hope. Entering this holiday season full of symbolic meanings, we remember the Willingway chandelier with hearts full of gratitude for our recovery.



## Scene and Heard



Emmy-nominated screenwriter and author Bill Borchert continues to travel with the Mooney Family and hold book signings for *When Two Loves Collide*. His next stop will be in Waycross, GA on December 10th. Don't miss it!



### Willingway Foundation Gives to Center for Addiction Recovery



The Willingway Foundation has been hard at work raising funds to donate to the Georgia Southern University Center for Addiction Recovery. In April, the Foundation donated \$4,400 to the Center. In August, the Foundation also donated \$60,000 to the Center. The Foundation board also approved an additional \$30,000 in funding for student awards.

The funds will be used to keep the center up and running as it works towards its goal of providing quality, long-term recovery for the student population through the Collegiate Recovery Community. The Center for Addiction Recovery has come a long way since it began in 2007. With the continued help of the Willingway Foundation and Willingway employees, C.A.R. has a bright future ahead.

Dr. Al Mooney, Chairman of the Willingway Foundation, says that, "We are so thankful to everyone who continues to support the Willingway Foundation. We are so appreciative of those who are involved with the Foundation through their time and resources. This helps fund important projects that help young people find new opportunities in life that addiction stole."

The Willingway Foundation is the non-profit charitable extension of Willingway.

If you would like to receive more information on how you can get involved in the Foundation or to receive more information, please call 800-242-9455 or email [willingwayfoundation@gmail.com](mailto:willingwayfoundation@gmail.com).

## Whoooo is Mr. Owl Mooney?

If you haven't heard the tale of Mr. Owl, you are in for a treat! While both are very wise, Mr. Owl Mooney is not to be confused with Willingway Board member Dr. Al Mooney. Mr. Owl Mooney made a visit to Willingway that we will never forget.

In mid-September, maintenance staff member Drew Dukes was cutting Willingway's lawn. When he looked down near the water, he saw something strange lying in the grass. Getting a bit closer, he realized that he was staring at the largest owl he had ever seen. The owl, measuring a foot and a half, was lying still and appeared injured. Drew called his fellow maintenance staff member, Reggie Hodges, to come check out the owl. Reggie wrapped up the owl in a towel and carried it to the maintenance shed.

When Maintenance Manager Bobby Reid arrived on the scene, he knew something must be done. With the injured owl lying comfortably on the towel in a make-shift bed constructed out of a cardboard box, Bobby made some calls. His first call was to the Wildlife Center at Georgia Southern University. After discovering they were no longer taking injured animals, he called the Department of Natural Resources. DNR also told him they wouldn't take injured animals and recommended that he "put the owl back in the woods and watch him." Refusing to put the injured animal back in the woods, he called Gateway Animal Hospital in Statesboro who referred him to the Port Wentworth Animal Hospital. Thankfully, the Port Wentworth hospital agreed to take the sick owl. Bobby then called CEO Barbara Reid to get approval to transport the owl to Port Wentworth. She agreed.

Weeks later, in a follow up call to the Port Wentworth Animal Hospital, a kind vet tech shared info about Owl Mooney's condition. After the doctor's evaluation, it was found that Mr. Owl was showing signs of a "neurological condition. With an injured owl, it is imperative that they are observed for three days to evaluate the need for rehab." She also informed us that "it is illegal to release an un-sound animal back into the wild to be attacked by predators" and that the maintenance crew had done the right thing in caring for the owl. Sadly, Mr. Owl's neurological condition deteriorated over his three days of observation and had to be put to sleep.

While we are so sad to hear that Mr. Owl didn't make it, we are thankful for the lessons he taught us. While he indeed had a mental condition, needed treatment, and came to the best rehab in the country, we could only extend to him Willingway's love and care. We referred him to the most appropriate treatment facility for our feathered friends. While Mr. Owl's neurological illness was indeed different than the illness of addiction, they are similar in the most important way.

Mr. Owl faced many of the same trials that addicts do. He too was turned down by many treatment centers before only one was willing to help him. He too had a disease that needed prompt treatment or it could take his life. He too was of un-sound mind. With all of these trials, Mr. Owl Mooney's legacy remains. It reminds us to take care of ourselves, take care of our fellow sufferers, and if those we know need help, we must make take action. If you are walking around the pond one day and you hear a "Whooooo" coming from the trees, just remember that it is Mr. Owl's angel reminding us of our mission – saving lives and helping others.

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

December 10th –  
Waycross, GA

Please join us for a  
***When Two Loves Collide***  
book signing with  
Emmy-nominated  
screenwriter & author,  
**Bill Borchert**  
Please visit [Willingway.com](http://Willingway.com)  
for more events



# CONTINUING CARE MEETINGS

## **Albany, GA 31707**

Tuesdays 6:00 p.m.  
1511 W. Third Ave  
Suite 101  
229-669-3959  
Charles Lamb

## **Atlanta, GA 30345**

Tuesdays 6:00 p.m.  
Shallowford Presbyterian  
Church Counseling Center  
2375 Shallowford Rd., NE  
404-216-3882  
Robby Carroll

## **Augusta, GA 30904**

Saturdays 10:00 a.m.  
Covenant Presbyterian  
Church  
3131 Walton Way  
706-736-1183  
Joe Ward

## **Hilton Head Island, SC 29928**

Wednesdays 6:30 p.m.  
Christ Lutheran Church  
829 William Hilton Pkwy  
843-384-8759  
Carol Rively

## **Houston, TX 77024**

Tuesdays 5:00 p.m.  
9525 Katy Freeway  
Suite 200  
Conference Room F  
281-451-5163 or  
713-263-0400 ext. 203  
Kristin Anderson

## **Jacksonville, FL 32207**

Mondays 6:00 p.m.  
All Saints Episcopal Church  
- Education Bldg  
4171 Hendricks Ave  
904.463.1246 (John) or  
904.463.5200 (Cathy)  
John & Cathy Roberts

## **Macon, GA 31201**

Mondays 6:30 p.m.  
Centenary United  
Methodist Church  
1290 College Street  
Fellowship Hall  
478-538-3863  
Don Wilkinson

## **Raleigh, NC 27622**

Mondays 6:00 p.m.  
Suite 320 Anderson Plaza  
100 East Six Forks Rd  
919-349-6269  
Charlie Wagner

## **Savannah, GA 31405**

Mondays 6:00 p.m.  
300 Commercial Court  
Suite F  
912-920-9392  
912-657-0426 (cell)  
Jayne Holland

## **St. Simons Island, GA 31522**

Saturdays 10:00 a.m.  
The Club House  
1501 Demere Rd  
912-617-6385  
Joel Mills

## **Statesboro, GA 30458**

Wednesdays 6:30 p.m.  
Willingway Outpatient  
373 Savannah Ave  
912-764-6236  
Charles Stokes

## **Waycross, GA 31501**

Tuesdays 6:30 p.m.  
Quality Inn, Room 163  
Corner US 1 & US 82  
912-286-0258  
Sandie Blackburn

Join our  
email list  
**TODAY**  
at  
[willingway.com](http://willingway.com)

Don't miss it!

**WILLINGWAY  
HOMECOMING  
2014**

April 25-27, 2014



Join the Willingway Foundation Team  
and find out how you can get involved and give back!

Send an email to:  
[willingwayfoundation@gmail.com](mailto:willingwayfoundation@gmail.com) to sign up!

**Are you staying in the loop?**

Be sure to stay connected through Willingway's social media.  
Like us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter and read our  
monthly blogposts at [willingway.wordpress.com](http://willingway.wordpress.com)!



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