

Meet B Here Today's Ultimate Recovery Carrier: Bill White

On the last Thursday of each of the preceding 11 months, the *B Here Today* Recovery Carrier post has started with these words:

William White defines recovery carriers as “people, usually in recovery, who make recovery infectious to those around them by their openness about their recovery experiences, their quality of [life](#) and character, and the compassion they exhibit for those still suffering.” (www.williamwhitepapers.com, 2012)

Today, on a day traditionally set aside for celebrations of love and giving, here is my Christmas gift to you: A collection of thoughts and writings from the consummate Recovery Carrier and muse for this series, Bill White.

Recovery *is* contagious, and as one who attended the St. Paul, MN, gathering of new recovery advocates and carriers in 2001, I'm proud to help spread the infection of recovery. Thank you, Bill, for your decades of passionate service.

I hope you enjoy the remainder of this holiday season and may it bring you peace and prosperity, joy and love.

From Bill's essay, “Recovery Carriers”:

Addiction recovery is often caught before it is chosen—meaning that one can get swept up in recovery in a process as unplanned and as irrational as how one got caught up in addiction.

Catching recovery involves exposure to people in recovery with whom one can identify and who serve as catalysts of personal change.

I don't think this is something you can decide to be. It is rather something that emerges within some people out of the very process of recovery or from experiencing what Ernie Kurtz (1996) described as their “own dark night of the soul.”



From the keynote address at the NorthEast Treatment Centers 40th anniversary celebration in Philadelphia in 2010:

Addiction is a disease of exposure—a collision between personal vulnerability and social opportunity.

My message is a simple one: Recovery is contagious.

As a culture, we have recognized this process of social contagion. We have long referred to surges in alcohol and other drug problems as *epidemics*—a term most often applied to communicable diseases.

The contagion of addiction is transmitted through a process of infection—the movement of addiction disease from one vulnerable person to another.

Addiction is visible everywhere in this culture, but the transformative power of recovery is hidden behind closed doors.

From Amplification of Remarks to the Association of Recovery Community Organizations at Faces & Voices of Recovery Executive Directors Leadership Academy Dallas, TX, November 15, 2013:

Recovery is contagious. This phrase suggests that recovery can be “caught”—interpersonally transmitted—before it is chosen. Recovery is spread through exposure to recovery carriers (“wounded healers”)—people who make recovery infectious through their persona and their love and service to those still suffering. Positioning the contagiousness of recovery counters the ideas that people must “hit bottom” before recovery is possible and that family and community are powerless to affect addiction until the addicted person is “ready” for recovery. This notion of contagiousness suggests quite the opposite: that recovery initiation has as much to do with hope as with pain, and that hope can be elicited through interpersonal encounters with people living vibrant, meaningful lives in recovery.

Thank you, Bill, for your words, ideas, thoughts and expressions of faith in this thing we call recovery. Our field, as well as all those in recovery who call you friend, are blessed by your work.