

Meet B Here Today's Recovery Carrier Dr. Herby Bell

Today's post is the fourth in a series of interviews with folks across the nation (and the Universe!) who embody a life of recovery, from the physical to the psychic. Please enjoy this conversation with Dr. Herby Bell, an addiction recovery coach and licensed healthcare provider in chiropractic care. His practice is called Recovery Health Care. Herby also enlivens the airwaves with podcast series, Sober Conversations.

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)

When you hear the term “recovery carrier,” as it relates to addiction, what does that mean to you? Do you think you're a recovery carrier?

In the tradition of the recovery carrier concept, Beth, I do believe I've caught the bug...I mean the buzz. Recovery IS contagious because it is all good things when it comes to beholding the ecstasy *and* the angst of Existence. Giving up chasing the buzz to literally entering into the Buzz of Life is what it feels like to me.

I remember the run-up to understanding just what in heaven was happening to me as I decided to give up what in hell had become of me. I'd go to the rooms of AA—and other places of healing—and listen. Stories...raw, world class, extraordinarily ordinary stories of, “What it was like, what happened and what it's like now.” Dude, I wanted what *they* were having . . . inspiration after inspiration until I began to realize, say and write my *own* story. The power of, “I can do this!”...WOW.



It seems to me I've “arrived”, (albeit just a parenthesis in my eternity) in a place now where it feels like my healthy compulsion to carry the message of recovery is really “none of my business.” As if reclaiming the unadulterated truth that I care *deeply* about my life, about others and the world through the lens and metaphor of recovery—is the reason I was born. And you know...I always did care. I just didn't know how to get out of the self-imposed hell and prison I was in until I started listening to, and hearing other carriers. My turn. *That* kinna unapologetic, big picture, dignified, purpose and meaning and what I believe to be the transformational miracle of addiction recovery. My God, you're evoking tears with this beautiful question.

You're a recovery coach, a chiropractor and a believer in "optimizing metabolic machinery of the mind, body and spirit," to quote your interview with Bill White. You're also a person in long-term recovery. It sounds like you show up every day for work and bring all of yourself to the job at hand. Can you describe your work--especially the idea of recovery wellness--and tell me why you do it?

I love looking back and realizing that necessity truly is the mother of all invention. I learned to get and stay well because it was a matter of wellness or insanity, a matter of life or death.

As we know, addiction is a progressive phenomenon where mediocrity and half measures suck, so I had to find a way to navigate in "thrival" through life--what I found out to be my birthright. By the grace of Providence and my training, I was exposed to integrated systems that honor mind, body and spirit fitness--just what the recovery "doctor within" ordered.

What I practice and what I do is teach people to give our innate genetic intelligences the essential nutrients they call for by getting back to the basics naturally and easily--slowly, but surely. We *have* the technology...we *have* all the "metabolic machinery" to integrate mind, body and spirit already onboard. Moving from toxicity and deficiency to purity and sufficiency with progress and not perfection is what I'm up to with my clients. If we get the Big Idea, all else follows.

You have a bit of a unique perspective when it comes to recovery advocacy. You say that recovery advocacy IS health advocacy. Can you say more about that?

As the grandson of a surgeon and the son of a psychiatrist, my entree into the wellness community was through becoming a chiropractor. The premise of the practice is to, as non-invasively as possible; remove interference from an already self-regulating, self-healing, mind-body-spirit system. I have spent a career studying and realizing, "There is no way to wellness, wellness IS the way."

I spent the front end of my career in the traditional medical model of "chasing symptoms" with my patients when it became exhausting and a ticket to burnout--for all involved. I'm now invested in my practice through the metaphor of, "teaching a man to fish" by living and teaching wellness practices. The translation to the recovery community is absolutely seamless.

And so if the recovery community is anything, it is the quintessential example of a group of people who are practicing daily wellness interventions to uphold wellness thresholds as a matter of sustaining their thriving lives--since half measured approaches don't cut the cake for cats and kittens like us. We have proven quite dramatically that waiting for

symptoms to arise, IE, the sickening and often fatal, addiction relapse—and then offering symptom suppression quick fixes—is *not* working.

Health advocacy, and in this case, recovery advocacy boils down to long-term addiction recovery *equaling* long-term wellness practices—in all of its manifestations, *period*.

From where you sit, what is the number one issue or challenge recovery carriers must address? Is it the idea of, again as you say in your interview with Bill White, "fueling recovery advocacy in a more robust way with an overall wellness model?" What might that model look like?

The American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM)—in the very mainstream of American health care power structure—has a recent policy statement and definition outlining addiction as having, “Mind, body and spiritual manifestations” requiring “long-term” mind, body and spiritual approaches and remedies. Whoa.

With the advent of such revolutionary declarations, I honestly believe, Beth, that the addiction treatment/recovery community is going to usher in the template for that mind, body, spirit wellness model simply because *we have to*. The writing’s on the wall and WE are our best advocates for what we know is best for US, and “US” includes 3 out of 4 families!

Addiction is the poster child of what the integrated mind, body and spirit look like: *Disintegrated*. The culture is just now beginning to embrace memes and practices regarding what *true health*, (not merely the absence of symptoms) is, and looks like.

As Recovery Advocates and carriers, WE are the ones who will *model* good health and who will build an infrastructure to sustain it. WE are the ones we’ve been waiting for. WE are the recovered hunter-gatherers of sustained, renewable health. Together, WE can do this. Let’s Roll.

Is the time for wellbriety now? Will you describe the term and why you believe society is ready to adopt it?

“Wellbriety” as the Native American tradition espouses, includes robust health in intellectual, emotional, moral, physical and spiritual intelligences. And here’s the kicker as mentioned, but bears repeating; we already have everything onboard we need to fire ‘em up, to up-regulate our super intelligent, super systems. Actionable, doable practices of eating, moving, thinking, feeling and sleeping well, one day at a time for a lifetime are what the genetic blueprint calls for.

What’s more is that wellbriety calls for a reverence for “all my relations” or a deep respect for myself, for others and for the intelligences of Earth and her environment. We have an intimate relationship with the environment and must take care of ourselves *and* our environment(s) for wellbriety to be honored.

I truly believe the time for wellbriety has arrived, first brought to us by the progenitors of this great society, Native America. An ironic gift back from an ancient culture who has had so much taken from it, but irrefutable evidence that one cannot rob a culture of its dignity and truth. And sadly, the time has arrived because necessity IS the Mother of all invention, and because if we do not, we will perish.

What's next for Dr. Herby Bell? How will you continue to carry the torch for recovery and even wellbriety?

I have a great big dream and vision called *Recovery Health Centers*™ in the works in collaboration with other addiction professionals. Places where we move from “treating addicts” to restoring health and dignity to *whole* humans. A place where people are given the full measure of the addiction treatment equation including detoxification/stabilization, rehabilitation **and continued care** in an integrated, multidisciplinary, patient centered and directed approach. A healing place where people are not set up for discharge the day they arrive, but set up for true, lifetime care with regular, mind, body and spirit checkups. RHC's are where people get well and stay well—for Life. Look for one coming to a town near you...

I continue to stand up and speak about these issues regularly from High Schools to colleges and from service clubs to addiction treatment facilities. I also produce a podcast entitled, *Sober Conversations*. The interviews take a look at sober/wellness lifestyles from as many perspectives as there are people who live them. If anyone reading this is interested in telling a story or perspective, let me know!

I hail from a family devastated by intergenerational tragedies resulting from the brain disorder and disease of addiction. And...I have *never* been more passionate and optimistic about the evolution of brain science informed, 21st Century addiction treatment and recovery for the millions out there who need it *and* deserve it.

Thank you for this distinct privilege and honor, Beth and for the wonderful work you bring to our community and world. Here's to carrying ON!

