

## My Story by Karen Casey

I'm Karen Casey, a very grateful recovering alcoholic and codependent, and this is an overview of my 83 year journey which has been rich with rewards. However, I didn't recognize most experiences as rewards at the time they were happening. In fact, I now choose to believe that every experience anyone of us has is a reward that is carrying us to where we need to be for the next, significant leg of our journey.

My first drink at age 13 actually opened the door to unimaginable rewards that have not yet come to an end. Why did I take that first drink? I needed to quell the anxiety that was crippling me. My family of origin fed the anxiety and the solace I sought from anyone outside my home wasn't forthcoming. Alcohol seemed to be my solution. And it worked until that day when it no longer did.

Coupled with the alcohol, I sought relationship partners and then a first husband who I was sure held the key to ending my insecurities. Alas, codependence finds no solution in relationships. But it did ultimately lead me into the first 12 step room I ever encountered and my life's trajectory began to change on that fall evening in 1974 when I timidly walked into Al-Anon which has remained a part of my journey for all these many decades.

But it wasn't until I was encouraged to go to my first Alcoholics Anonymous meeting in May, 1976, that I experienced the even more profound awakening of how life could actually change. It didn't happen immediately, however. In fact, even though I remained sober from May 24th on, my struggle to know God, as others seemed to know Him, wasn't forthcoming.

After nearly 18 months of sustained sobriety, I decided I wanted to escape this life altogether and my suicide was planned. I didn't fear it. I had no dread. I just wanted to be free of the near constant anxiety. The plan was developed; the towels for tucking around the windows lay on the kitchen table, and I was ready for the next step when a knock on the door interrupted my plan. I called out "who's there?" "Pat," she said.

I reluctantly opened the door and was face to face with a red-haired stranger who insisted we had scheduled a meeting to discuss my financial future. My name appeared in her daily planner as proof. Her first question, "Are you ok?", was the turning point. I shared with her my struggle with depression and my inability to feel God's presence and she assured me that "God was always here. I only had to reach my hand toward His." She said she understood my dilemma. She had struggled to at times. Nary a word about finances was uttered. After our brief discussion, she stood to leave and as she headed toward the door, she stopped, turned toward me, and hugged me gently, and said, "You are going to be fine. God is present now." I breathed a sigh of relief. I never saw Pat again, but I have no doubt that she was an angel "on assignment." God had plans for me and an early death wasn't on His agenda.

Because I was still haunted by how easily others felt the presence of God, I eventually felt called to sit quietly in a big worn-out recliner to pray and listen and my willingness allowed God's words of comfort to trickle in. Because it seemed like the thing to do, I dutifully wrote them down. I had grown accustomed to the ease of writing while pursuing my Doctorate but I had never imagined how that experience would lead me to what my real calling was going to be.

And as is so commonly said, the rest is history. That initial experience of listening and writing became my first book, a daily meditation book for women in recovery: *Each Day A New Beginning*. It was published in 1982. It has been followed by more than two dozen additional books, the last one being *Each Day A Renewed Beginning: Meditations for a Peaceful Journey*, which was written during the long months of being quarantined in Florida. How many books are yet to call to me I have no idea but I am blessed to know that I have been in touch with well over 6.5 million readers since the publication of *Each Day A New Beginning* which is celebrating its **40th Anniversary** this year.

I'm not sure why I have been invited to live the miraculous life that's been mine, but I hope to be around a few more years. Just maybe the best is yet to come.

