



**National Addiction Recovery Month 2015**  
**NAATP Executive Director Marvin Ventrell, COMMENTS**  
**@ RIH *Recovery is Happening*, in Rochester, MN 9.13.15**

1. NAATP is grateful to be part of this celebration. Thank you RIH.
2. You folks look happy and excited and alive!
3. It is not like I hear from 1 guy I know who says “we are all a bunch of liars, cheats, and thieves.” You don’t look that way to me. You look wonderful!
4. That message of liars, cheats and thieves is not our message; it is not what unites us; rather it keeps us sick and it’s a bad public message.
5. We in recovery are amazing people, just like other amazing people and we have a great opportunity here for personal and public progress for our disease and our message is a message of personal joy and usefulness to society.
6. So we have to tell that story, a TRUE story – an ACCURATE NARRATIVE.
7. Because the disease basic narrative is pretty much the same for all of us.
  - a. We drank or used and it was good. We liked it.
  - b. So we drank or used more and it was good.
  - c. But more use brought problems to our lives.
  - d. So, we used even more to solve those problems.
  - e. Then the substance became medicine.
  - f. Then the disease took root and our bodies needed it and our minds obsessed about it  
“My body would not tolerate what my mind would not leave alone.” F. Holmquist.
  - g. So we finally tried to quit but we could not.
  - h. So accepted help.
  - i. And we found a program of recovery and got well.
8. Feel free to fill in the blanks, name, town, substance, family, duration, sexual preference, jobs, legal system, divorces, victimization, financial and health, losses, etc.
9. So we found a program of recovery, a pathway; and there are multiple pathways.
10. Let us not be fundamentalist about our particular pathway.
  - a. Mine is a 12 step program.
  - b. The SAMHSA definition of recovery is a nice explanation of recovery pathways.
11. And let’s tell our true stories of recovery and dispose of some recovery myths that hinder our recovery and deter public progress for our disease.



## First Step: Get rid of the recovery myths.

### 7 Recovery Myths

1. We are a bunch of liars, cheats, and thieves.

Speak for yourself. And shaming is sickness, not recovery.

2. We are powerlessness.

Wrong! "our dilemma **WAS** lack of power" and we found power and "proper use of the will."

3. My worst day sober was better than my best day drunk.

You must have done it wrong; I had a blast. Bob Ferguson calls the recognition that drinking and using was once happy an "uncomfortable truth" that we are afraid to talk about it. But then we do not tell a true story. It is not the same as "romancing the drink." The distinction is that the disease has rooted and it's chronic now so we can't use anymore.

4. Time sober doesn't matter.

"You cannot be serious!" John McEnroe.

5. I may, if I'm lucky, stay sober today.

Real recovery is not that fragile or our program would not be worth much would it? Real recovery is solid and lasting. This doesn't mean addiction is not a chronic disease.

6. Too bad that guy isn't here in this room anymore. Everybody who is well is here.

This is arrogant and not statistically reasonable.

7. I did nothing to get well; I don't know how sobriety happened.

It's arrogant to think that a "God" just chooses some of us chosen folks to be sober.

So Let's continue to take action! Make some noise! Just like AA Founder Bill Wilson and Ms. Marty Man did publicly. **12 Step Program anonymity is NOT Disease anonymity.**

**We have a Beautiful Powerful Voice. Please use Yours, Speak your Truth, and Be Well. Thank you.**