

Extracts from Testimonies

Each paragraph is from the testimony of a different person.

All these testimonies are visible in full at www.mindandsoul.info

History: Alan contracted a mystery virus and was rushed to hospital. **A Learning Curve:** I felt God very close to me and was full of peace even though this was a very difficult time. **Decisions And A Big Move Ahead:** Sometimes in life when you need help the most, people leave you and don't come up trumps. **Day To Day Living:** Working full time also meant that Alan was alone most of the time and he had now been diagnosed with Fibromyalgia as well. **Dealing With The Shock - The Grieving Process:** I've given my tears to God.

When I became a Christian, there were many changes, both big and small, to my life. However, my mental state wasn't one of them. I cried, pleaded, begged and bargained with God to take this part of my life from me. I had difficulty reconciling my faith with my mental illness. How could a God who loved me totally and unconditionally allow this destructive illness to keep happening? When things are hard and living seems impossible, just remember that God is with you - and He is your healer. Find your resting place in Him, and give him all your burdens. You may not see total healing, but He is working healing into your life.

Fortunately, I have a few special friends who give me so much support and encouragement with my faith that, despite being away from the church, it is still strong and healthy. I am constantly in their prayers and they will answer every question I need to ask, no matter how many times. Their patience and love is a constant in my life, as is the Lord's.

Dad came in and listened to me, and for the first time in a long time, someone heard what I was going through and I suddenly felt like someone was with me, and for me. Suddenly, once I'd offloaded to dad, and felt his support, I felt a strength to look to recovering. That night was God intervening, hearing my heart. I was not thinking of Him, but He was thinking of me, and came to help.

I was catapulted out of a life of obscurity into a life where everybody knew my name. I could not venture outside without being followed by hordes of kids who were avid fans of the show. This was kind of difficult for a kid of 13 to handle... I sit here writing this 10 years later so thankful for what God has done in my world. I have lived more, done more and been a part of some of the most incredible things in the last 10 years. I am happily married to a beautiful woman - she is incredible. I work full time at church and absolutely love what I do - helping head up the music team.

As a social worker, I used to visit people with depression. I had my training, had read books on the subject and thought I had a good understanding of it. I realise now that I had not the first idea about how indescribably awful the whole experience is. Experience is the hardest teacher but it is the most effective one; in mental distress you really get the whole picture as a result of it. Having gained this service-user experience and perspective it has contributed very greatly to my understanding of mental distress and has informed my practice as a social worker no end.

As time and my recovery developed I came to fully understand and appreciate the points he was making. John, the Vicar, told me about something called the Alpha Course and that it was just about to start and that I could join it if I wished. I said that I would and later persuaded my wife to do the same. Due to my severe depression and agitation intellectually, I was not up to anything much at all. Decisions like - should I go right or left, have tea or coffee or nothing, seemed altogether monumentally too difficult to make.

I then have spent the next seven years living out my salvation and growing and maturing in line with God's word (the Bible). I got and continue to get a lot of support from my church. I started dating for the first time in ten years and have since married my wife who is a great blessing and loving support to me. I also have two step children. I came off benefits and am now in full time employment working with clients who have a "Personality Disorder" diagnosis like I had. I enjoy life and feel fulfilled.