

To whom this may concern:

My name is Nicole Cetrangolo. I graduated college in December of 1994 with two BS degrees. About three months later, I was brutally assaulted and nearly murdered by someone that I knew in college and who had become a Massachusetts' State Trooper. The assault lasted over eight hours in which I was beaten unconscious (nearly to death), kicked, punched and tortured, all while a locked and loaded semiautomatic 9 mm gun was being held to my head. At one point the person put the gun in his mouth and tried to make me pull the trigger. I was also raped while the gun was held to my head. This high-profile case made national news.

Before this 'incident' I had no psychological issues and had never seen a mental health professional for anything. Immediately after this brutal attack, my mind slipped into what was diagnosed as 'acute and severe PTSD'. It took days, weeks and months to just remember most of the events that took place. Over the next nine years, I was hospitalized many times in mental wards. These hospitalizations were too many to count. I can estimate there were more than twenty (some lasting in excess of three weeks).

Over the years the years I was prescribed in excess of 40 different psychiatric medications, often taking ten or more of these a day.

I was extremely suicidal and made numerous attempts to take my life. One of those attempts resulted in me being in a coma for a week and the doctors saying, "there was no medical explanation why I lived." For many years, I wished I had died that horrible night that I thought had changed my life forever.

In 2002, a doctor wrote a letter indicating that I was "permanently damaged and would most likely never be able to function on my own again". After hearing this prognosis, I felt doomed and began drowning my feelings of hopelessness with alcohol and drugs.

During one of the ensuing hospitalizations in April of 2003, the psychiatric team considered having me committed to a long term facility due to my determination to end my life.

Subsequently, I was hospitalized an additional four times at CRH; the last of these being in July of 2004. One afternoon during this hospitalization, I was standing at the nurses' counter saying to the staff how I was stuck in this mental state of feeling "forever doomed" and how I did not want to live anymore. A doctor whom I had never met was standing at the far end of the counter and overheard my comments.

At some point that doctor interjected and said that these feelings were due to my thinking. My first thoughts were that he had no idea what he was talking about because he didn't know me nor what had happened to me, and that I was an exception to what he was saying. I said just that.

He responded by elaborating a little on his previous statement. At that time I got a glimpse of a light, a light that I now see all the time. He later dropped off books on the Three Principles by Sydney Banks. After watching several videos of Mr. Banks my life completely changed. A few years prior, while hospitalized, a video was played for a group. I 'got it' immediately but it didn't last. I asked the staff who the video was of and no one knew. I could not find any information on it. It wasn't until years later that I realized who it was after Dr. Pettit gave me some videos to watch. It didn't take long for me to realize that there might be a way out of the state of mind that I had been unknowingly feeding for so many years and resigned myself to. The only ways out that I had ever previously known were attempting suicide, using alcohol and drugs, and praying (daily) for God to take me back.

When I met this doctor (Pettit), I was on 300 mg. Zoloft daily, 200 mg. Trazodone at night, 1 mg of Klonopin 3x/day and Ativan as needed for flashbacks which I usually took daily.

During the previous nine years, my longest period of time in between hospital stays was no more than a few months. The day I met Dr. Pettit was the LAST DAY I was in a mental hospital (some 4+ years ago) and no longer need the medications. I began to see that there was a different way to perceive my thoughts. This enabled me to see I also had control over my future. This was something I always had deep inside me, but completely lost touch with as a result of the trauma. It was not about the thoughts I was having, as much as it was what I chose to do with them. I might add that I had been a patient of a number of doctors who are currently considered to be the best mental health professionals in the country.

I have not been hospitalized in well over three years. I no longer consider suicide as an option or would even want to die. All of my perspectives have changed. I am mentally healthier now than I have ever been. These simple concepts have allowed me to change myself and my way of thinking.

I am now doing things that I never thought possible. I have recently been presented with 'life challenges' unlike any I have experienced before. I am better equipped now, than I EVER would have been (even prior to the trauma) had I not learned this way of thinking.

I only have one wish, that being that all people struggling with any form of mental illness could learn of these principles and apply them to their own lives. If I was introduced to these principles before I was traumatized, I could have avoided many hospitalizations, self labeling, suicide attempts, and all of the grave and grim prognoses by the dozens of doctors I saw. Understanding these Principles saved my life. They saved me from myself and my thinking. I would suggest these Principles not only for the "mentally ill" but for ALL humans in the world in order to better their lives and the world. I know I would not be here today without that chance meeting at the counter during my LAST hospital stay over 3 years ago. I can't say enough about this and the great potential it has to change so many more lives if it were learned

and accepted around the world. The great thing about it is not only how easy it is, but also that nobody has anything to lose by simply opening their mind and learning about these principles.

I am so grateful for meeting Dr. Pettit and being introduced to Sydney Bank's Principles.

I has allowed me to live again and enjoy living.

Most sincerely, Nicole Cetrangolo