

## ADHD and Psychogenic Medication and Greg C.

I've always been a high achiever. I set goals for myself and then I pursue them with everything I've got. For a long time this worked well for me. My achievements were pleasing to my parents, who gave me a lot of approval and made me want to achieve even more. My father was very successful financially at a young age and placed a lot of value on worldly status and possessions. So did my mother, and, of course, so did I.

By my mid-20s I was making a lot of money working in the hospitality business in Las Vegas. I had a responsible job at Caesar's Palace and I gave it everything I had, so much so that I was losing my balance. I worked so much that I stopped doing very much of anything else. Las Vegas is a 24-hour-a-day, 365-days-a-year place, a city that never sleeps, and demands are made on you constantly to keep the machinery running. I would always go the extra mile to troubleshoot an emergency, accommodate unexpected guests ... whatever came up.

Somehow, amidst all this work I did manage to meet a woman I wanted to spend my life with. Stephanie and I married when I was 30 and she got pregnant soon afterwards. This added even more responsibility, and although I didn't understand it then I began showing signs of nervous exhaustion.

I began to lose my appetite. I'm a wonderful cook—I went to school to become a chef early in my life—and every day after work I'd come home and cook a healthy meal for my wife while she was pregnant, but I found I couldn't eat.

After the baby was born—he's a boy—I cooked for each of them the kinds of nutritious meals I felt they should have, but again I couldn't eat the food I cooked. I'd have a piece of toast or something. For someone going at breakneck speed the way I was, this wasn't good. I wasn't taking care of myself.

You see, I had this Superman complex where I felt I had to take care of everyone and everything. I never told my wife how scared I was of failing because that wouldn't be taking care of her. I hid my insecurities and just pushed myself.

Often I'd go back to work after dinner. If my wife protested, I'd make up a story about some emergency that had come up. The truth was I felt I had to do more just to keep up. It's a mindset. I felt things would fall apart if I didn't hurry up and do more.

At a certain point this became an issue for me and Stephanie, and we saw a counselor who suggested I work in a less stressful environment. I found a job at the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors' Authority, thinking it would allow me more time for a normal life. But just the opposite happened. I became even more stressed and worked even longer hours. Even with my son at home I

couldn't tear myself away from work.

Stephanie insisted I see a psychiatrist about my workaholic attitude. I began seeing a woman who diagnosed me as bi-polar and gave me three strong medications to even out my highs and lows. I began talk therapy as well.

Looking back, I probably should have gotten a second opinion from another psychiatrist. The talk therapy only dealt with my euphoria and my depression. We never talked about the underlying problems that were driving me. I began getting worse and worse. I felt so much responsibility that I couldn't handle it. There was nothing in my life that felt comfortable and grounded. I felt anxious all the time; I couldn't sleep or eat.

At one point I threatened to drive to Hoover Dam and jump. Stephanie got on her knees and cried and begged me to get some real help. There is a psychiatric hospital in Connecticut my family knows about and they offered to send me there. By now I'd lost my job. I knew that if I wanted to get my life on track I'd have to get more help.

So I spent the summer in Connecticut getting a lot of individual counseling, and group therapy, too. Stephanie went to Chicago with our son to stay with her parents. We lost our house. Stephanie is now in Chicago and we are both praying for reconciliation and a chance to start life over together.

In Connecticut they added lithium to the drugs I was taking, bringing the number to four. These were all very strong drugs, including Effexor, Paxil, and Depakote. I didn't like the way I felt on the drugs. They made me drowsy and blurred my thinking.

Another side effect was weight gain. I went from my habitual 165 pounds (I'm 6 feet tall) up to 215.

When I left the psychiatric hospital, I came to the desert to stay with my mother. Today I'm under the care of a psychiatrist, going through a healing process. When I told a friend about how uncomfortable I felt weighing 215, he recommended I see Dr. Platt.

Initially I went just for the weight loss, but I have received so much more from my treatment. The great miracle is that not only have I gone back to my usual weight, I've been able to wean myself off all the drugs I was on.

My intake interview with Dr. Platt made me feel very comfortable. When I told him about all the drugs I was taking, he told me I was over-medicated, and that if I followed his hormone treatment and his diet I would be able to wean myself off the drugs. I told my psychiatrist about Dr. Platt and he was open to the idea of helping the weaning process along, as long as I continued in therapy with him and continued to examine the issues that got me into trouble in the first place.

I started Dr. Platt's treatment in January and set myself the goal of being drug-free and at the proper weight by the end of March. I reached my goal by early March, and today feel absolutely fantastic. I feel so lucid and my thought processes are so clear compared to how I felt on the drugs.

I'm continuing in therapy and applying for jobs in various industries such as banking and insurance—more conventional industries where the hours are normal. I don't want to be in the hospitality business any more.

While I'm waiting for a job to come through, I'm delivering newspapers at night. It's something I never could have imagined myself doing at the age of 32. But it gives me time to think about what I want for my future, and I see the moon and stars every night and watch the sun rise every morning. It's a humbling experience, but it's also a rebirth. I feel the foundation of my house has been properly poured this time. I've gotten so much help with my worldview, both from my psychiatrist and from Dr. Platt, who encourages me to approach life as an enjoyable journey. I'm thinking in a way I've never thought before. I used to have so much fear that I was never going to amount to anything in life. Now I know that if I stay balanced I will have an impact on the lives of my loved ones and hopefully my community, and that's all I want.