

The Gifts That We Cannot Foresee – Alesandra Rain's Special Mission

By Christopher Cussat

This is not your typical story of addiction. None of the usual standards apply. Unlike many who began their addiction and history with substances at a very young age, Alesandra Rain began hers nearly at mid-life. Although she had experimented with some illegal drugs like marijuana and cocaine, she never had an addiction problem until she started taking *legal* drugs. Now after recovery, she is a successful author and lecturer who has also co-founded *Label Me Sane*, an outreach organization that helps people worldwide safely and comfortably taper off prescription medications and triumph over addiction.

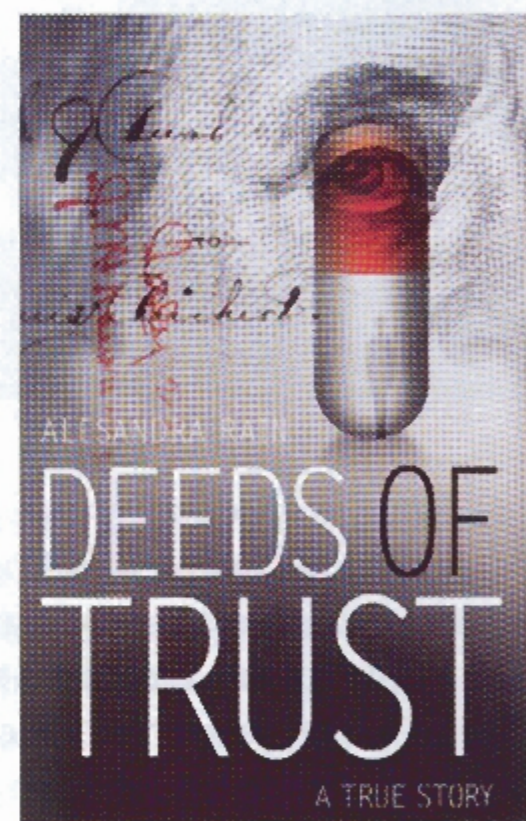
Rain's bout with addiction to prescription drugs began with an unbelievable act of personal betrayal. Not long after they were married in 1993, her husband began to slowly poison her with mercury and boron. As she began falling ill, Rain naturally sought treatment. This was the beginning of her addiction problems. Rain recalled, "Shortly after we were married, I started getting sick and was misdiagnosed by the medical community – a lot of what I went through had to do with depression, insomnia, pain and anxiety. That is why I was given a number of different medications and that is what initiated my spiral downward."

In other words, as she sought relief from the symptoms caused by poisoning, the medications that were prescribed led to different reactions and side-effects, which then required additional drugs. Rain explained, "All of these prescriptions [including tranquilizers, sleeping pills and antidepressants] really got me into trouble, particularly the benzodiazepines (valium class). When I had mercury poisoning and was misdiagnosed, one of the first things that started happening to me was severe insomnia." Rain was given Klonopin and after about a year, she reached tolerance for it and her psychiatrist increased the

dosage. "It never occurred to me that it was an addictive substance and that is what started my whole nightmare because within a few years, I was on a cocktail of prescription drugs."

Thus a vicious cycle was born. As continued insomnia led to more depression, Rain was prescribed an increasingly addictive concoction consisting of Effexor, Ambien, Restoril and Sinequan. But as her body began to weaken, Rain's severe physical problems led to even more prescriptions. "My spine kept breaking down and after fourteen surgeries my pain level went through the roof – I did not know that one of the side effects of benzodiazepines is increased pain, so to treat this I ended up on opiates like Norco and OxyContin as well as muscle relaxants."

Rain spent ten years on these drugs and they changed her mental state, physical health, personality and even her appearance. Photos from before she began treatment (just three and a half years ago) look like a totally different person. But during her years of addiction, Rain had inklings that something was wrong. Unfortunately, her supposed caregivers convinced her otherwise. She explained, "It took me ten years to realize I was addicted, but I remember a few times thinking, 'I really don't want to be on all of these pills,' and I would miss a day or two and would feel so horrible." Rain added, "But my psychiatrist said it was a chemical imbalance





and I bought into that for a very, very long time – I thought that maybe there was just really something wrong with me and I needed all of those drugs.”

But Rain could not continue to ignore the signs her body and mind were sending. She explained, “I couldn’t leave my house or even step out onto my balcony without horrible fear.” Even Rain’s love of nature diminished. “I had a real passion for nature but it no longer mattered – the grass and sky didn’t have any color anymore.” Rain finally reached an obvious conclusion, “One day I looked at all of these pills and asked myself, ‘Wow, are these the root of my problems?’” For Rain, it was an amazing realization.

Five years after learning she was being poisoned by her (now) ex-husband, Rain took the first step toward recovery and healing. After completing her degree in psychology, she began to work on a master’s degree in film. Rain vividly recalled her important turning point, “I noticed that my memory wasn’t as good as it used to be, my hands were always shaking, my pain was really high, I was aging so fast and my personality was changing.” Rain started asking her psychiatrist questions like: “Are you sure these things aren’t addictive?” – “If we’re treating something in my brain, when does it get fixed?” – “When do we stop?” Her psychiatrist answered that it would be a lifetime of treatment and she had to think of it like insulin. Rain responded, “Something just didn’t ring true with that and I wondered what I would be like if I wasn’t on all of these pills.” Finally Rain told her doctor that she wanted to get off the drugs and asked him what to do. He said

they were non-addictive and she could just decrease her dosages by half.

So Rain’s first attempt at recovery was a solo effort. When she tried to cut down on her own, she became very ill. “I got the worst, most violent flu of my life and after a few weeks of not getting better I moved to Los Angeles to live with my twin sister.” Rain went to a local doctor, who was the first person to tell her that benzodiazepines were the most addictive substances on the planet. She remembered, “I was really surprised. Then I started doing research and became terrified – all I could find were stories about people who had permanent brain damage from quitting or from being on them long-term – I was on them for ten years!”

After trying to quit by herself for four months, Rain harshly learned that she was going to need help. “One night I had a horrible hallucination – I thought all of these people were in my sister’s home and I was walking around talking to them. The next morning I found out that I was in a full blackout and there was nobody in the house.”

Realizing she could not do it alone, Rain eventually found Cirque Lodge in Sundance, Utah. This rehabilitation center offers a twelve-step based program that reconnects its patients to nature. Said Rain, “They were absolutely amazing. It’s a beautiful treatment facility nestled in the mountains. I always loved nature and I thought that if I could be someplace beautiful I could get through this.” Rain completed Cirque Lodge’s program and kicked benzodiazepines on site. “They had this phenomenal horse training program – we taught them and learned how to communicate and build relationships. That was my favorite part of the program. What worked for me and what I really loved was being out in nature. The day I could go outside and actually smell the grass, hear the birds sing, see the mountains and feel connected to it all without it being painful – I knew I was on my way back to the state that I was meant to be in – free of addiction and free of all these substances.”

After recovering, Rain made a pledge to help others beat their addictions. “I had an idea in treatment – I noticed that many people on prescription drugs won’t taper. They’re just

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taking them and not abusing, but they can't quit cold turkey because it's excruciating." She continued, "What I went through while getting off these drugs was the most painful thing I've ever experienced. I thought, 'What happens to all of those people who don't have access to a place like Cirque Lodge?' That's when I got the idea of educating and helping others get off these types of drugs in their own home anywhere in the world." As a result, Rain co-founded *Label Me Sane*, a tapering and withdrawal outreach program specifically designed for people addicted to prescription drugs.

Label Me Sane utilizes natural supplements to help addicts taper off, recover and live substance free. Rain and her founding partner, Andrea Crocker, researched Glutathione, our body's master antioxidant which is present in every cell. According to Rain, most addictive substances deplete it. After much searching, they found a

company that developed the means to raise Glutathione levels in the body. "We ended up going to this company in Canada that has done twenty years of clinical trials." Rain tested this supplement herself and the results were incredible. "I got started on it and began to heal in ways that I just never thought possible – all the pain melted out of my body – it's remarkable."

Label Me Sane is now a full recovery organization which offers four natural supplements (including the Glutathione builder), personal support, and a workbook that walks people through its tapering program. They have helped over 6,000 people in 28 countries just in the last two years! Rain exclaimed, "It's an amazing feeling and I've never been happier!"

Rain's new book, *Deeds of Trust*, is currently being made into a screenplay. It is about her life's story of betrayal, addiction and recovery. "For me it's

only about inspiring others because my whole goal is for people to understand that we don't have to live like this. I know what addiction does, it keeps you mired in darkness and you can't heal. Things that happen in our past are supposed to be compartmentalized into our past and as long as addiction stays a part of our lives – those hurts, pains and disappointments stay in the forefront, and accomplishment goes right out the window." Rain concluded, "One of the things that I want to impart to people worldwide is that we are meant to live happy – I don't believe we are meant to be on any of these substances."

Deeds of Trust is available at Amazon.com, www.alesandrarain.com, the Barnes & Noble website and bookstores everywhere. For more information about tapering prescription drugs, visit www.labelmesane.com, e-mail info@labelmesane.com or call (866) 605-2333. ■

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