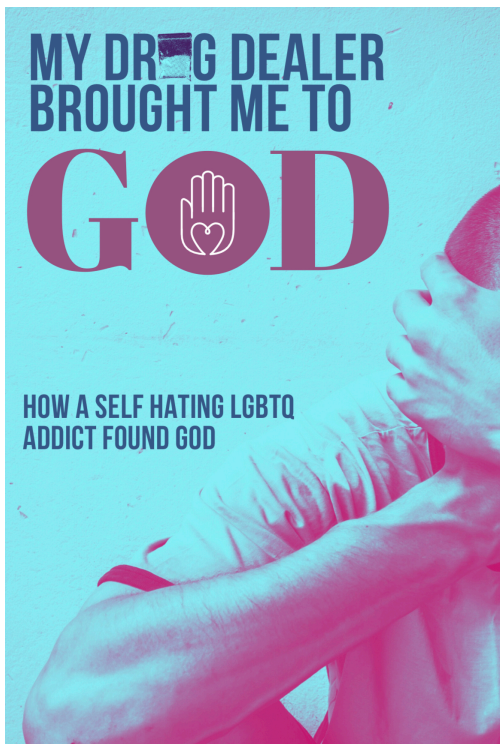


## How a self-hating LGBTQ+ addict found GOD

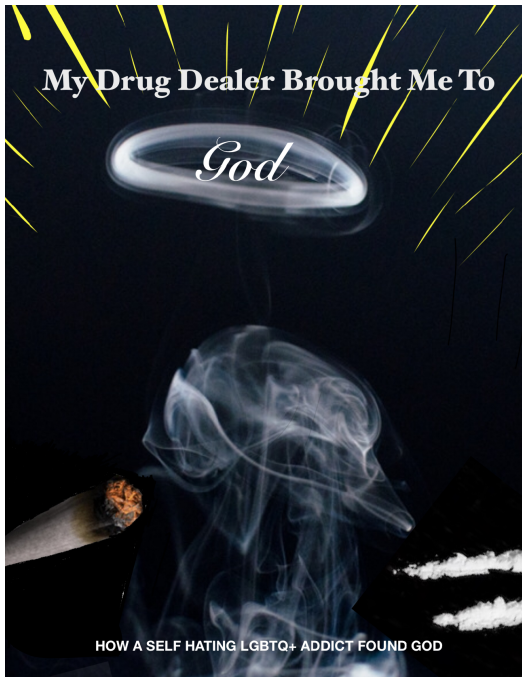
A memoir of the life of Ryan Joseph Allen

### Chapters

1. **Christmas Cut to the Last-** When I was six years old I had the first thoughts of ending my life. Throughout my teenage years I self-mutilated and I'm a double survivor of suicide.
2. **The Actions to the Attempt-** When I was 15 I had my first attempt to end my life. My second attempt when I was 17 was just a few days after Christmas.
3. **13 Going on Addict-** I started drinking at the age of 13 and quickly fell into smoking weed and experimenting with hard drugs. Leading to intense self-medicating and excessive use.
4. **My First Coming Out-** My best friend when I was 15 was from a private catholic school and was a couple years older than me. When I came out to her she told me she accepted me and



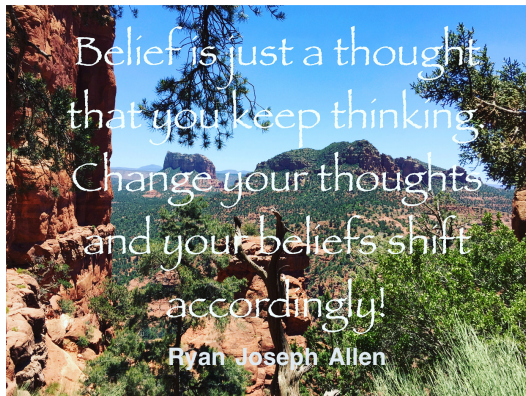
RYAN JOSEPH ALLEN



loved me even though that's not what she had been taught from her church/school.

5. **Shepherd of Shepherds- Ever since I was around four years old I was always drawn to God. My aunt at a young age baptized me and told me I was "a shepherd of shepherds".**
6. **Mommy, I'm Gay or Bisexual or Whatever** -I formally came out to my mother during Harper's mothers pregnancy.
7. **I'm coming out 🎵🎵 AGAIN-** This time it's for real and I'm singing it loud and proud! The LGBTQ+ community wasn't initially what I thought it was.
8. **Hurt People Hurt People-** Pastor Ed emphasizes that sometimes we hurt others because we too were hurt, but this doesn't give us free reign to hurt others without repercussions. We have to heal!
9. **The Golden Rule, with a Caveat-** My Mom always taught me to treat others how I wanted to be treated. The caveat is-you have to want to treat yourself with love, kindness, and acceptance or this golden rule falls vastly short of its true potential.
10. **A Mothers Love-** I was always parked on my mom's hip. As I became a teenager we became enemies in my mind. Now, she is truly my best friend.
11. **A Father's Love-** There was always physical





distance between me and my father as he lived hundreds of miles away. As we became adults there too became a distance in our hearts. Maybe one day we will reunite?

12. **From Adderall to Opioids**- In my teenage years I dabbled in all types of pills. As I got farther into my addiction opioids took over.
13. **To Heroin or Not to Heroin**- I was selling some of my daughter's old clothes and toys to a consignment shop for drugs. In that moment my friend's drug dealer called me and asked if I wanted heroin instead of pain pills. There was a whisper that gently but forcefully said "no" in my ear. Whisper=God
14. **Trippin' and Rippin'**- After I came out I spiraled out of control. Smoking a great amount of pot daily, taking psychedelics, and starting on my opioid path.
15. **Evanesence**- One day before my 23rd birthday I just snorted a line in my car and a song came on over the radio that forever changed my life. I saw my daughter in her adult life singing me this song. I was devastated that I ruined her life. I never turned to a hard drug after that moment ever again!
16. **My Drug Dealer Brought Me to God/ (Believe in Faith)**- As my drug dealer simply shared her story with me and her journey with God I felt the presence overtake me. I immediately went into the bathroom and fell on my knees and asked God to save my life.



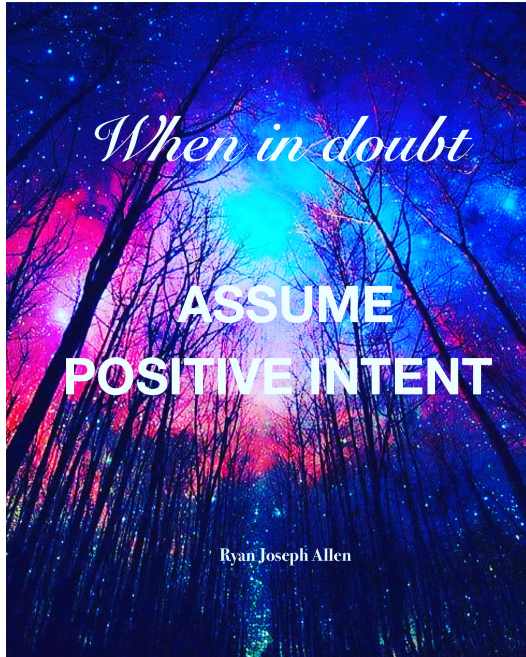


17. **My First Boyfriend**- I was never mirrored what a healthy relationship looked like growing up. Even more so, I was never mirrored what a LGBTQ+ relationship would look like or should look like. I had no foundation for a healthy relationship.
18. **My Last Boyfriend**- Over the years I learned how to build healthy communication styles, treat others how I truly wanted to be treated, and learned how to truly love someone. Even if in the end it didn't work out this was by far the healthiest relationship I've ever had in my whole life.
19. **And the Ones in Between**- The guys in between. Enough said.
20. **Falling for Bad Boys**- Throughout my experience in the dating world as a gay man I had a tendency to fall for the stereotypical "bad boys." Being in recovery that surely wasn't helpful.
21. **Falling for a Married Man**- I've only fallen in love twice in my life. And of course I fell in love with someone going through a divorce. Within that relationship I was able to see that I was still capable of falling madly and deeply in love.
22. **Umbrella**- Harper reminds me that even on our toughest days we always have something to give. When in doubt turn to children, for they are wiser than you could ever imagine.





23. **God Loves you Just the Way He Made You-** My friend Cody shows us all that even when we fear the worst sometimes God provides so much love and acceptance from the least expecting people.
24. **Help Them Love Themselves-** During my largest awakening-when I swore off all drugs and alcohol completely God came to me and told me that my job on this planet was to help others learn how to love and accept themselves.
25. **Self-love-** This is a journey that started during my spiritual awakening and my connection with God. It's a journey that still continues until today. And will continue the rest of my life.
26. **Safe Haven #1-** We started a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization based around love, acceptance, and kindness for all. I expected it to be so easy to help others, but found that though it is the most rewarding work of my life it also is some of the most difficult work.
27. **From Delta to Diamond Palace-** Martin is the founder of GLAST (Gays and Lesbians Achieving Sobriety Together). Watching his journey from afar and then becoming one of his best friends and business partners is one of my favorite experiences in the nonprofit world.
28. **Solo-Trip-** I was always so afraid to travel alone. I thought it would be lonely. I thought I would be bored. I thought I would need companionship. I was wrong.



29. **LGBTQ+ Bible Study**-A local church created a Bible study that I was so honored to be a part of. This piece of my journey really helped me heal some inconsistencies that I saw within the Bible around LGBTQ+ individuals. And also reminded me that God loves me and created me just the way I am.

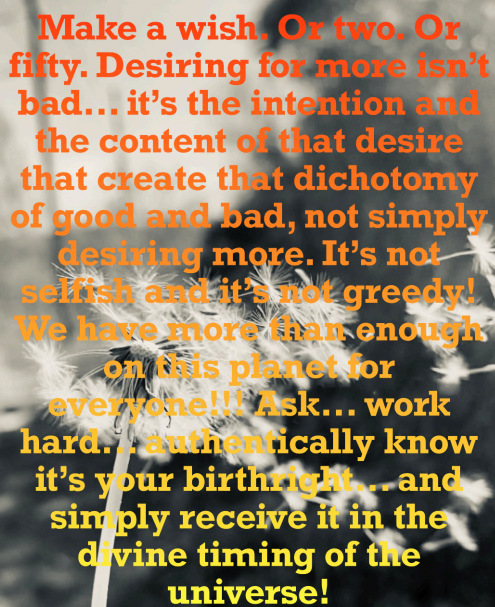
30. **School of Metaphysics, What?**- I was divinely guided to a nonprofit organization that teaches world religions, meditation, mindfulness, and overall health and well-being. At the beginning of my spiritual journey this was my church.

31. **Oneness, Meditation, and Connection**- Later in to my spiritual journey I became a Oneness practitioner, a daily meditator, and learned my number one skill in life-bridge building in connecting.

32. **Norse-Up**- Upon graduating with my two undergrad degrees I was guided to enter the MBA program at NKU. Honestly, God guided me there and I wasn't really sure why I was there. But, I trusted and fell into it with grace.

33. **Caffeine Won't Control Me Anymore**- Caffeine is one of the worlds most widely accepted and encouraged stimulants. Breaking free from caffeine might've been just as difficult if more difficult than hard drugs.

34. **An Addiction You Can't Live Without**- Battling a food addiction and body dysmorphia simultaneously has been one of my largest



**Make a wish. Or two. Or fifty. Desiring for more isn't bad... it's the intention and the content of that desire that create that dichotomy of good and bad, not simply desiring more. It's not selfish and it's not greedy! We have more than enough on this planet for everyone!!! Ask... work hard... authentically know it's your birthright... and simply receive it in the divine timing of the universe!**

Ryan Joseph Allen

battles in my sober life. We can't live without food, but it can also be one of the main toxins we put into our bodies.

35. **Is Hell Real?**- Harper asked me this when she was only five or six years old when we were hiking. It's important that we don't tell our kids what to believe, but we allow them to believe what they feel in their hearts.
36. **Punta Cana**- Eight days with no cell phone service or Internet service. In a foreign country where about 20% or less spoke English. All alone. But, was I ever so connected in a way I've never felt before.
37. **God Bumps**- Often when I feel the Divine presence of God's love I get goosebumps on large parts of my body or my whole body. It encourages me to listen to the subtle ways that my body speaks Divine truth!
38. **Multifaith**- I was able to help create a group in Cincinnati of faith leaders, church organizations, and belief based organizations. This work focuses in the LGBTQ+ community to spread love to communities that have been so hurt by religion in the past.
39. **POSE!**- I never truly even broke the surface of understanding HIV/AIDS until I watched this beautiful show that inspired me to educate myself and help educate others about the HIV community.





40. **Hearts and Hugs-** This is one of Love Must Win's largest programs that was developed to give a hand written message with a physical hug to someone who is struggling. When we hug someone for 20-seconds oxytocin is released and makes people feel bonded. This work has forever changed my life. I'm known as the Free Hugger!
41. **Gavin-** On my trip home from Punta Cana I sat next to a beautiful soul with cerebral palsy. He educated me about himself- but, more importantly we laughed together and discussed love... and how life was ever so beautiful.
42. **Pulse-**Love Must Win was one of the official 49 charities chosen to do community service projects in Orlando for the one year Pulse Memorial. Hugging thousands of people throughout the years at Pulse has been one of my truest blessings. To hug with people in that space and allow healing is powerful
43. **Dr. Allen? One for ALL-** As I was driving up to my doctoral program interview I saw the sign All For One and One For ALL. This is Xavier University's number one core value- I knew I was in the right place in that moment.
44. **A Papaw's Love-** My grandfather grew up with severe mental health issues. Luckily, about 10 years before he passed he was able to have a healthy and happy marriage and serve God's people. I'm so blessed I have so many years more than he had to spread God's love!