

Secondly Magazine



for Christian millennials

<https://secondlymag.com/2017/03/30/an-interview-with-marty-angelo/>

Christian Living



An interview with Marty Angelo

Marty Angelo has a truly remarkable story. Heavily influenced by his liberal professors in college, Marty was on his way up in the music industry in the 1970s. All seemed well on the outside, but on the inside, he felt empty. Everything culminated until one day when he was arrested for cocaine possession. While awaiting his day in court, he decided to finally listen to his sister, who kept nagging him to learn about a man named Jesus.

Recently, Secondly Magazine got in touch with Marty Angelo. You can read the full interview [here!](#)

Secondly Magazine: Where did you go to college? How did that shape you as a person, and

your worldview?

Marty Angelo: I first started out my higher education at three different universities in upstate New York and finally landed at the University of Buffalo. I was a very naïve though somewhat rebellious teenager entering college and was immediately exposed to very radical liberal left-wing professors. I really didn't know exactly what the definition of each word was, especially coming from a conservative Roman Catholic upbringing.

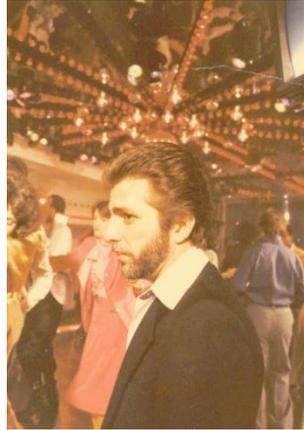
My professors did everything to influence me and other students with their anti-war Vietnam War rhetoric, even passing out protest signs, marijuana cigarettes and demanded that, as a required part of their curriculum, I attend anti-war rallies they set up around the campus. I was trapped hook, line and sinker into becoming a very extreme outspoken member of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) helping to organize rallies, booking radical bands like the Grateful Dead and the Jefferson Airplane and others to perform prior to members of the anti-war group the Chicago Seven and SDS leaders Jerry Rubin, Jerry Hoffman, Tom Hayden Bobby Seale, and others gave highly spirited and controversial, riotous causing speeches. It got so bad on other campuses because of this type of behavior that four Kent State University college students were shot and killed by the United States National Guard.

My worldview was interlaced with the mind-altering drug LSD's creator and promoter Dr. Timothy Leary's advice to all of us: "Turn on, Tune in, and Drop- Out." I believed him and followed what my college professors taught and didn't question them for one second.

SM: What happened after college? How did you get involved in the music industry?

MA: When my college days ended and the Russians hadn't actually blown us all off the face of the earth as my professors predicted, I went into the music business. It wasn't a stretch for me seeing the contacts I made booking bands on campus came in handy. I was inspired by our so-called underground movement and learned I could make a good living in the entertainment business as a rock band manager and later as a producer, concert promoter, music promoter, nightclub owner, dance television producer, disc jockey, and record reviewer. While playing piano in a local rock band we opened a concert show for a highly talented blues/jazz band called Raven. They were without a manager and asked me to help them achieve success outside of Buffalo, NY. I took many trips back and forth to New York City and ultimately met with guitar legend Jimi Hendrix, who helped my band get a booking engagement at Steve Paul's Scene, which led to numerous offers from record companies, including the Beatles Apple Record. The group finally signed a five-year contract with Columbia Records. I continued working in the music business for a total of 15 years.

SM: Did you feel fulfilled in your work? Would you consider your career successful at this point?



MA: My life in the music business was a total wreck. I always felt like I was on the outside looking in, even though by the world's eyes I had it made. I was empty, confused and without any purpose. Nothing ever mattered to me. I had no foundation other than more sex, drugs and living a rock music lifestyle. There was such a void in my heart you could have fit a jumbo jetliner through it and it still wouldn't fill it. I thought I was successful but my inner-self told me I was a loser and should just kill myself, which I tried three times, only to be saved at the last minute. I knew there was something wrong with me but just couldn't find out what it was.

SM: What led you down the path of addiction? What events led up to your arrest for cocaine possession?

MA: My first encounter with drugs was smoking cigarettes when I was six years old. My parents were heavy smokers and it was totally acceptable back then. No one taught that it was dangerous and could eventually kill you quite the opposite. In high school, I started drinking beer, wine and finally hard liquor. It wasn't until I got to college did I started trying other drugs such as pot, LSD, pills of all sorts, and cough medicine. This abuse continued throughout my work in the music business which became 100 times worse than I ever thought possible. Just about everyone I met was a drug user especially cocaine and eventually heroin.

Back in the mid-70s Miami Florida was known to have the best cocaine in the world. I had some friends who lived there and they always had a lot of the illegal drug. I traveled to Florida in 1980 to visit my parents who had retired to Fort Lauderdale and while there I stopped by my friend's house and bought some cocaine to take back to California with me.

Unbeknownst to me, my friends were under investigation by the federal Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) for the previous four months, so I walked right into a trap and was arrested right along with them. I was facing decades in prison for what the government said was my involvement in various conspiracies but I later came to an agreement with the court and pled guilty and agreed to serve six years in prison along with a special 3-year special parole period.

SM: What, or who led you to Christ? What was the turning point?

MA: The turning point in my life was my serious Miami Florida drug arrest. I was totally powerless. I actually was very thankful I got stopped in my tracks. Of course, I never wanted to go to prison, but I realized in the Dade County Jail cell that my life outside of that cold, dark, place was in a worse prison. I had some time to reflect on how out of control I was living and might now have a chance to try to turn it around.

My sister Joanne had become a Christian a couple of years before I was arrested and she kept reaching out to me, telling me about Jesus Christ and how He could change me and help save my life. I got quite angry with her because she wouldn't quit. Every time I went to my mailbox there was some sort of Bible outreach tract, testimony book or letter filled with Bible scriptures. After my arrest, I finally started to listen to Joanne and went to visit her in Colden New York. She called some of her prayer group friends and she drove me over to visit with them. They were ministers and explained the gospel to me in a manner I could understand it. They were all very loving people who told me God had a plan for my life and asked if I would like to be born-again. I gladly accepted. My whole life was turned around that night, April 24, 1981.

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SM: How did the conversion to Christianity impact your worldview?

MA: My life took a 180 degrees turnaround. I never thought in a million years that I would become a Christian. It was something I never planned on. It just happened at a time in my life that God knew I needed His help. If not, I surely would have overdosed and died in my substance abuse. One of the things I learned very quickly was instead of calling my actions, "Doing my own thing" what it really was called was a sin. I never looked at myself as being a sinner. We certainly didn't talk about that in college or amongst my music business contacts.

It seemed that the concept of sin had been driven right out of my life over the years, so when I learned from my sister and her friends that it was sin that was bogging me down, and was my main problem, I jumped at the chance to repent and ask God to forgive me and clean me up.

What really happened was Jesus Christ actually did come INTO my life and started to change me from the inside out. I eventually went from a left-wing, radical, liberal Democrat to an on-fire Christian conservative. I finally learned the difference between the two lifestyles by experiencing just who is able to bring about that change. What I used to love I now hate and what I use to hate

I now love. Only the living God of creation can do that to someone.

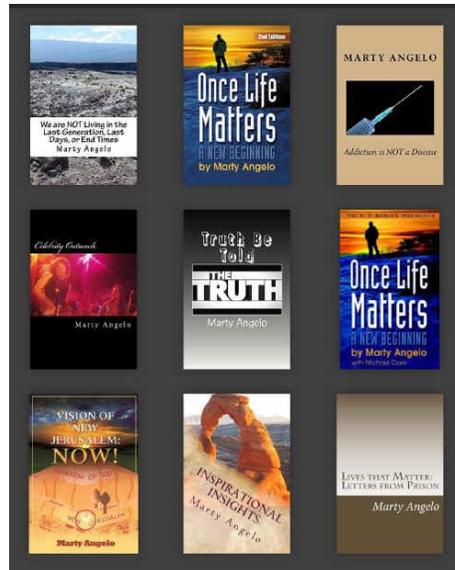
SM: How did going to prison move you to start your prison ministry?



MA: While I served my time in prison I saw myself in each inmate I met. There were a lot of drug users in prison and being there didn't stop their use. They found all sorts of ways to smuggle in the contraband and if I had not been a Christian before I came there I know I would have been one of the users myself. I had a new-found compassion for those around me. I tried very hard to explain what happened to me seven months before I started to serve my time could easily happen to them if they would open their hearts and minds to Jesus Christ. I got involved with a prison ministry group that Chuck Colson, former White House advisor to President Nixon started entitled, Prison Fellowship Ministries.

We formed a bible study through this organization and also attended numerous in-prison weekend seminars that helped disciple us into solid Christians. I graduated from four Bible colleges while during my time and used the knowledge I gained to help others. Life was good. In fact, I always stated to my friends that "this is the happiest I've been in my life." If I could be this happy in prison through faith and trusting in Jesus Christ then getting out and serving God on the outside should be even more enriching.

SM: Tell us about your ministry.



MA: My ministry has been an exciting 35+ years. I never thought for a minute that I would be doing such a work of God. I've traveled extensively throughout our country's prison systems, visiting jails, work release programs and county, state and federal prisons spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I've written 10 books so far and make all of those available to inmates and their families. I donated over 60,000 books so far and have received hundreds of heart-wrenching letters from inmates who have been touched by my story. God opened doors for me to help design in-prison drug treatment programs and also establish faith-based programs within secular programs as well. I've also reached out to troubled Hollywood celebrities making court appearances and referrals to faith-based treatment programs.



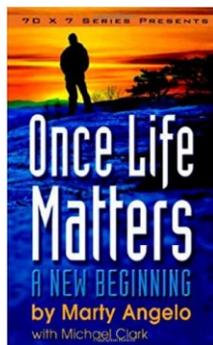
I was once asked why I never went back into the music business when I was released from prison and I share this story with them: Once I was released from prison God opened a door for me to work at Faith Farm Ministries in Ft. Lauderdale FL. I was thankful to be a part of a ministry who helped drug addicts and alcoholics.

I was working selling used appliances at the Farm's outdoor sales area. I was shining up the machines so they looked good to our customers. All of a sudden out of nowhere came a long black stretch Lincoln limousine that pulled right up to where I was working. Before I knew it the limo's darkened back door window came down and through it, I could see the backseat area was filled with smoke and the outlines of a few men.



It looked like a scene out of a horror movie. The door then opened and out popped Rob Grill, leader of the Grass Roots, the rock band I had managed years ago. “Angelo!” He yelled. “How are you?” He threw his arms around me and gave me a big hug. “Man it is good to see you, Marty.” Grill explained that he and the band were in town to perform at a Seafood Festival on the Ft. Lauderdale beach and he had heard from one of the promoters that I was out of prison living at Faith Farm. He wanted to see me so he jumped in the limo and came right over. “What are you doing here?” He asked. “This is no place for you. You belong here with me and the band. You were the best manager we ever had and even saved our lives a couple of times. You need to snap out of this Faith Farm daze you are in and get in this car and come back to Hollywood with us.” I explained to Rob Grill that I was truly honored that he would want me to work with him again but I felt this was where God wanted me to be. “In fact Rob,” I said as serious as I could. “I wouldn’t get in the back of that limo if you offered me a million dollars in cash right now.” Grill stood there for a moment and said, “Hello Marty Wake up. You are selling appliances in a place that looks like a junkyard. And... and... and... the appliances are not even NEW! Snap out it, Marty!”

SM: How do you hope God will use your story to advance His kingdom?



MA: I’ve witnessed how God has used my life as an example to others who once they place their faith and trust in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior that anything is possible. Just the letters I’ve received from inmates who have read my book, “Once Life Matters: A New Beginning” makes it all worth it. Besides the thousands of lives changed in prisons and in the treatment programs I worked in or helped start makes what God has done in and through my life all worth everything

He brought me through to get me to this point.

SM: What makes you passionate about sharing the gospel?

MA: I know God is not done with any of us and each day is always thrilling to wake up to find out what He has planned. There has never been a dull moment, that is for sure and I am so thankful for His grace, mercy, and love. However, I have also learned very early on in my walk with Christ that God is a JUST God meaning that there are consequences to an out of control sinful action. Yes, He is there to forgive but I learned to think first before acting and not the other way around. Life will always present situations that need God's guidance and with Him living within me, I am able to walk the straight and narrow path to living a righteous life.

SM: What does the name Jesus mean to you?

MA: Jesus means Life and life more abundantly. The peace that passes all understanding. Knowledge, Wisdom, Patience, Love, Faithfulness, Truth, Joy, Kindness, Goodness, Gentleness, Self-Control, Prince of Peace, Lord of Lords, King of Kings, the Everlasting Father, Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ, the Holy Ghost, God our Savior, God in you, the Beginning and the End, the Great High Priest, Great Shepherd, He died for all, He dwells in us, He gives rest, He is the first-born of the dead, He is the head of the body, He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire, He shows mercy, The Holy One of Israel, the Great I AM, and so much more.

Please see my upcoming book entitled, "Names, Titles, and Manifestations of God: all that He has done and continues to do for all mankind." It is jammed packed with every possible way of explaining what Jesus means to all of us.

What I used to love I now hate and what I use to hate I now love. Only the living God of creation can do that to someone.