

## DOC JENSEN'S TOTALLY LOST

### 'LOST': REDEMPTION SONG

By Jeff Jensen

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Doc Jensen makes his case that the castaways' journey can be seen as an allegory for addiction recovery

(Note: There was a three-week build up to this story in previous Totally Lost columns. They are listed below along with their links.

1. "Next week, our official month-long countdown to the premiere of Lost begins! A band will perform! Free pie will be distributed! Zombies will show up! And I can assure you that at least one of those three exclamatory promises will come true! PLUS! You will meet the acquaintance of another "Lost Super-Fan" whose unique creative engagement with the show truly deserves to be called spiritual." - Dec 29, 2009 - 'Lost': The 'M:I 3' Connection

2. "I had a whole different column planned and nearly written for today. It contained an essay-theory on the themes of redemption and addiction in Lost. It was going to reveal secret themes embedded in one of the most famous scenes of the Lost pilot. It was also going to introduce you to a super-fan named Lyla Miklos, who created a program for an entire church service using characters, motifs, and scenes from Lost." - Jan 5, 2010 - 'Lost': 28 Days to Go!

3. "My dissertation on redemption, my theory about addiction, and my profile on Super-Fan Lyla Miklos — all of THAT will finally arrive next week." - Jan 15, 2010 - 'Lost' Exclusive! The As-Yet-Unseen Third 'Supper' Promo Image!)

## DOC JENSEN ON 'LOST'

### 'LOST': A SHOT AT REDEMPTION

Doc Jensen makes his case that the castaways' journey can be seen as an allegory for addiction recovery (with a special focus on Jack). Plus: A chat with super-fan Lyla Miklos, who talks about the "Lost" church service she's written

By Jeff Jensen | Jan 21, 2010

## PHYSICIAN, HEAL THYSELF!

Beginning today: Ongoing coverage of "The Redemption Season" of Lost!

"Physician, heal thyself!" is not a rallying cry for MDs to serve as their own practitioners. The contemporary understanding of this maxim: Attend to your own health instead of busy-bodying yourself with diagnosing and judging other people. Or: Mind your own damn business. My translation?

"Physician, heal thyself!" is a rallying cry to mend our spiritual brokenness. The ironic problem with

fulfilling this mandate — and the implicit paradox within this pearl of wisdom — is that we can't do the job alone. The labor must be shared. We need extra eyes to see the stuff we can't or won't. We need extra shoulders when our stuff becomes crushing. We need extra hands to reach the stuff beyond our grasp. In other words... we actually need people to get into our business. The pilot episode of *Lost* offered a potent visual metaphor for this philosophy of redemptive healing. It's the moment when Dr. Jack Shephard tried to sew up his gash — a physician literally trying to heal himself. But the wound on his side was closer to his back than his front; it was beyond his reach. Humbled, Jack beseeched Kate to help him.

Take a look at the scene in the player below. For me, the metaphorical subtext kicks in at 1:30, when Jack sneaks into the jungle to perform his self-surgery. The key word there is sneaks — watch him as he looks around nervously, as if worried of being followed or seen. This is Jack the Hero Junkie, hooked on feeling his own strength, ashamed of feeling — and being seen as — weak, impaired, limited. Fittingly, the sequence culminates with Jack's iconic "Count to five" story. Watch him almost snarl with self-loathing as he talks about his own fear. The look on Kate's face as she listens to Jack's macho extremism is priceless: she looks terrified... and maybe just a little turned-on, too. So begins the push-pull of her attraction to this reckless savior...

The most famous utterance of "Physician, heal thyself!" is found in the New Testament, when Jesus makes sardonic use of the proverb. Its exact Biblical coordinates set off my Doc Jensen alarm bells: The Gospel according to Luke, chapter 4, verse 23. I have this theory that the Numbers correlate to Luke chapters 4, 8, 15, 16, 23 and 24 (the last chapter of Luke, and an inversion of 42), as each of those chapters are filled with *Lost* ideas and motifs...but I'll save the full scope of that suspect Sunday School lesson for another pulpit.

However, consider just Luke Chapter 4. It begins with Christ entering the wilderness to be tested by Satan. It ends with Christ casting out evil spirits. In between, you'll find a verse that strongly evokes the song that ABC has chosen to showcase in its season 6 promos: Willie Nelson's rendition of "Amazing Grace," the classic Christian hymn, composed by a slave ship captain-turned-clergyman and abolitionist. Luke 4:18-19: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." The hymn — which was most directly inspired by the parable of the Prodigal Son found in Luke Chapter 15 (another Number) — begins like this: "Amazing Grace!/How sweet the sound/That saved a wretch like me/I once was lost/But now am found/Was blind/But now I see."

All of *Lost* is like Luke 4. It's a story that began with people who entered a wilderness and found themselves tested by mysterious, menacing forces. It is now ending with our heroes battling at least one evil spirit, and maybe more, depending on what we ultimately learn about Jacob, the Man In Black, Smokey, and Ghost Christian. And in the middle of this amazing saga about a very strange form of timeless grace, *Lost* has been about souls struggling toward redemption — about "prisoners" trapped by their past, about "blind" souls learning to see themselves for who they really are, about "oppressed" people liberating themselves from powerful, exploitative forces that would rather keep them stuck in their ruinous rut. It is a story about wandering prodigals seeing the light and running back home. The

story will end badly for some and ambiguously for others. But for those who find the triumph of redemption, my hunch is that they will do so together, as a community.

#### SUPER-FAN LYLA MIKLOS ON BRINGING LOST TO THE CHURCH

All of this is my way of saying that "redemption" is the big theme I'll be tracking most during the final season of *Lost*. And I suspect that this week's *Lost* Super-Fan will be, too.

#### QUESTIONS FOR A SUPER-FAN: LYLA MIKLOS

##### Fate-or-Coincidence? (Part One)

As I was beginning to find and pull together the aforementioned *Lost*/Sunday School lesson, I received an email from one Lyla Miklos, who wanted to share with me her story about decorating her door at work with *Lost* imagery. I thought that was sweet and neat and all — but what really got my attention was her by-the-way mention that she had also created an entire church service built around the narrative, characters, themes, and motifs of *Lost*. As someone who has always been intrigued and moved by the show's exploration of the themes of faith, redemption, and the maybe-crazy/maybe-true stories we tell ourselves about ourselves, I wanted to learn more about Lyla's engagement with *Lost*, as I sensed she and I connected with the show in a similar way. Lyla stands for the manymanymany fans for whom the show has reflected themes and expressed ideas that have challenged their worldview, informed their own ongoing development or examination of their worldviews, and just generally moved their deeper being.

To be clear, *Lost* is not holy scripture of any sort. Think of it more as a devotional text for a culture divided between Team Richard Dawkins and Team Rick Warren and further fragmented into many more teams in between. Moreover, please don't think that I think you, dear reader, must share these portentous and pretentious perspectives in order to find *Lost* magnificently entertaining or qualify as a Super-Fan. But in the spirit of celebrating the wide spectrum of *Lost* fandom, I wanted to profile Lyla and her uniquely fervent relationship with the show. You can click the following link to find her order of service, "*Lost*: A Television Tale of Faith and Redemption,".

DOC JENSEN: What character do you relate to the most and why?

LYLA MIKLOS: I can't say that there is any particular character that I look at and go "Yep, that's so me." [In addition to Juliet, Mr. Eko, Ben, and "hot hot hot" Sayid, Miklos cites John Locke: "If any of us were in this man's shoes, wouldn't we want to find some significance and meaning in all of this Island insanity, especially after all the negativity that your life has been immersed in? Some of it very much by your own doing. Can't break the cycle. Go back to old patterns. Can't accept grace and happiness when it's right in front of you. Keep obsessing over the one thing that you can't have. Then feel like a failure because you couldn't see the many new roads of opportunity all around you. The Island is the ultimate vindication for every bad choice you've made." — Doc Jensen note: My own take on this theme follows my chat with Lyla.]

The themes of faith clearly resonate with you. How does the show's ruminations on faith nourish your own spiritual walk?

The message that *Lost* keeps pushing is that there are things that are destined to happen. The fates have their plans. But we are not bound by fate. We have free will. There are paths and journeys we are meant to go on, but we make our own choices and those choices have a ripple effect. We are all interconnected and we can never take for granted how the decisions we make affect the world around us. No man is an island (wink, wink, nudge, nudge). If we want to see change we need to be that change and forge new paths that have yet to be explored.

What inspired you to do the *Lost* church service?

Back in Spring 2004 my church was asking for congregants to submit ideas for church services for the summer. I put forward a proposal about the parallels between Unitarianism and *Star Trek*. The Church Services Committee dug my idea and asked me to create a service. Then in 2006 the feminist in me wanted to praise *Wonder Woman*, *Xena*, and *Buffy The Vampire Slayer*. The more I watched *Lost* the more I felt in my bones that there was a church service sitting right in front of me. After I read Nikki Stafford's *Finding Lost* it helped to organize and cement some of the ideas that were bubbling in my brain. I was able to give the concept some form and shape and focus.

DOC JENSEN: How did the congregation receive it? Did they like it? Did anyone object? Any memorable feedback?

LYLA MIKLOS: Everyone at my church knows that pop culture and sci-fi are my "thang." I think with my *Lost* service everyone really appreciated how I took it to the next level. It just went a little deeper and it really made some strong spiritual connections. It was the first time all the old-timers and seniors made a point of yakking with me afterward to tell me how profoundly moved they were by what my sermon explored. All the younger congregants usually dig my services, because it tends to connect a bit more with them. So the praise from the older congregants was quite unexpected.

Are you PRO time line reboot or ANTI time line reboot?

I don't know if it helps to choose a side in this debate. It does seem somewhat inevitable that there will be some kind of time line reboot. But I don't believe that Jack, Kate, Sawyer, etc. will get the reboot they were hoping for. They may all end up back at the Sydney airport and get to choose to walk away from Oceanic flight 815, but they will also remember all the joys and sorrows from their many years on or off the Island. They will have to live with the decisions they made. The very human traits that all our beloved *Lost* characters are guilty of are getting stuck in their own negative modes of behavior and never getting themselves out of their unhealthy patterns. They all don't know how to be happy. Too many of our *Losties* cling to their past, their fears, their anger, and their sadness. Until they let it go, they will forever be stuck on the merry-go-round and never get off. They need to take a leap of faith and free themselves on a spiritual level that has meaning to each one of them as individuals.

In 25 words or less, answer this question: What is Lost?

The best damn show on TV!

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FATE-OR-COINCIDENCE? (PART TWO)

Readers will know that for the past few weeks, I've been promising an essay about Lost as an allegory for addiction recovery. In the midst of my work, ABC released this video, one of its fast-paced, eight-minute summaries of the series so far — and perhaps the best one yet. I took its characterization of Jack as a sign that maybe I was onto something with this addiction thing. It's worth watching — both as pre-season 6 prep, and as orientation for the essay, now finally finished.

FROM PERMANENT MIDNIGHT TO BREAKING DAWN: THE SERENITY PRAYER OF LOST

Lost has always presented itself as a saga about redemption. But what does "redemption" really mean? The word can be defined several different ways, from the ransom of captives to the cashing of coupons. When it comes to Lost, we primarily use the word in the context of character reformation. Each castaway possesses a flaw, sin, or injustice that requires transformation, forgiveness, or atonement. One of the earliest and most enduring theories of Lost has been that the castaways were intentionally brought to the Island to work their stuff out. Think of the Island as a recycling plant run by a bitter old guy dressed in black who's biggest client is a hippie named Jacob who spends his days picking up CAST-off/thrown-AWAY cans at the beach so he can finance his expensive tapestry hobby.

Okay, let's get serious. How does one become redeemed? Is the process fundamentally spiritual? "Redemption" does have some strong religious flavor to it, and so does Lost. Last year we got an episode entitled "316" — a reference to the Bible's most famous redemption verse, John 3:16 — in which Jack converted from being a man of science to a man of faith. Still, while Lost clearly finds inspiration in several religious traditions, I don't think its story is about evangelizing one faith over another. Instead, I would argue that Lost conforms to a different model of character rehabilitation. As Lyla pointed out in our chat, many of the characters are conspicuous for being stuck in ruts of stinking thinking and ruinous behavior. Their head spaces are echo chambers for feedback loops that limit and diminish their spiritual, emotional, and physical health.

No, I don't really understand what I just wrote, either, so let's choose an easier-to-grasp metaphor: addiction.

FROM PERMANENT MIDNIGHT TO BREAKING DAWN: THE SERENITY PRAYER OF LOST

Indeed, from the start, Lost has associated redemption to the process of addiction recovery. The tone was set by season 1's first successful redemption story: Charlie's mystical heroin rehab, facilitated by sponsor-seer Locke. Most of the redemption/addiction stories on Lost concern "pseudo-addictions,"

which are more psychological in nature. Each castaway's defining "issue" is characterized by a pattern of destructive and self-destructive pathology or behavior that is compulsive, habitual, and viciously cyclical. And so it goes that Sawyer is hooked on conning; Kate is hooked on running; Hurley, eating. In every case, the behavior offers the illusion of empowerment or escape, but actually enslaves and debases, leaving those in its thrall crashed and marooned. Such is life in the dark territory of the addict's Black Rock Island. (If Doc Jensen was on the Island, my addiction/redemption issue would be... well, Lost. Or this.)

Just as the castaways debated the legitimacy of "the Sickness" throughout the first three seasons of the show, the field of addiction science is rife with debate over what causes it. Painful psychic wounds? Genetic and familial antecedents? Weakness of character? Some misguided if not perverse sense of benefit? The arguments pivot on tricky philosophical questions, all of which have been alluded to in Lost, like Nature vs. Nurture, Fate vs. Free Will, and Determinism vs. Personal Responsibility. The addicts of Lost embody all of these impossible-to-parse conundrums of addiction causality. Sayid is a man for whom expressing his will through violence feels like an ever-present option/temptation. Is he a natural born killer? Did familial and cultural forces shape and mold him? Was he corrupted by circumstances? Does he consciously choose to be what he wants to be? Or do divine forces continually deal him really crappy cards? Lost has given us stories that explore each of those questions and have answered them: "Yes, Yes, Yes, Yes, and Yes." It then coldly asks the question Benjamin Linus asked Jack aboard Ajira 316: "Who cares?" It's not that understanding the origins of addiction isn't important; it is. But understanding isn't enough to remedy the addiction. The addict must take ownership of his problem, then take action, and let enlightenment dawn and radiate throughout the doing.

After breaking the addiction cycle, the defining challenge for the recovering addict struggling to stay sober is to manage the worst tendencies of their "bad self" while believing they are worthy of their redemption and capable of living it out. It's an angel-and-devil-on-either-shoulder — or Jacob-and-Man In Black-on-the-beach — struggle: One voice full of grace and speaking of progress, the other voice full of cynicism and certain of doom. Put another way: staying sober is a constant fight to stay in the present and avoid slipping into the toxic swamp of the past. Which, by the way, is exactly the nature of the Sickness when we finally learned it was real and true in season 4.

For me, no character on Lost better represents the show's addiction/redemption dynamics than Jack Shephard. No one has more ironically embodied it, too. His dangerously problematic compulsion: fixing people. He is a "cowboy with daddy issues" — a do-gooder whose drive to mend and save isn't an expression of virtue or idealism but the unhealed pain from his childhood inflicted by a damaged, damaging alcoholic father. Jack — forever smarting from that moment in his youth when Christian Shephard told him he'd never cut it as a hero — is constantly putting himself in situations that allow to him prove a point to his pop, from becoming a doc like his father (and seeking out the riskiest, most impossible challenges) to throwing himself into the chaos of the Oceanic 815 crash site. You could say Jack's pathology is akin to the show's approach to time travel. He's constantly trying to psychically wormhole back to that apocryphal "You're not a hero" moment and change its outcome by giving his younger self the ammo to say, "You're wrong about me, dad." That's impossible, of course. All Jack is doing is creating debilitating paradox: He is treating a painful old sore by picking at it — and he's

become hooked in the scratching. In doing so, the sore never heals, and worse, the sore festers, so old pain is compounded by new complications.

One of those new complications has been Jack's abuse of booze and pills to numb his inner tumult. It's my opinion that Jack already had an abusive relationship with alcohol when he came to the Island. In the pilot's opening moments, the first thing Jack did after standing up was pull that extra bottle of airplane gin out of his pocket. Why hang that conspicuous, loaded detail on Jack, like, immediately? Later, when we got the airplane flashback where stewardess Cindy gave Jack two bottles to strengthen his weak drink, he dumped one into the cup and pocketed the other. If he needed only one, why didn't he give the other back or leave it on the tray? Regardless, Jack became a fully activated addict during his Oceanic 6 idyll, and despite Ben's pill-flushing intervention and the alleged healing powers of the Island, he has never adequately dealt with his chemical dependency in a conventional way. Here's my prediction for Jack's final scene in *Lost*: Attending an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting and introducing himself to a new group of fellow travelers by saying, "My name is Jack, and I'm an alcoholic." Perhaps it'll take place in the basement of Eloise Hawking's church. (Just watch out for the swinging pendulum.)

Humor aside, I have seriously wondered if *Lost* has planted clues pointing to AA as Jack's final destination. It would certainly be an apt redemptive remedy for a guy addicted to fixing. One possible clue: Jack's ideological war with John Locke. AA demands that addicts acknowledge and submit to a "greater power," i.e., God, and throughout *Lost*, Locke has been the chief advocate for Island-as-"greater power" argument. But Locke is a much more complex symbol. As we all know, John Locke's namesake is a philosopher — more specifically, a philosopher who belonged to the Age of Enlightenment, which argued that man's strength of reason was enough to master the world and his circumstances. Yet AA is adamantly anti-Enlightenment; it is an example of Counter Enlightenment philosophy. Says Wikipedia: "AA shares the view that acceptance of one's inherent limitations is critical to finding one's proper place among other humans and God. Such ideas are described as 'Counter-Enlightenment' because they are at variance with the Enlightenment's ideal that humans have the capacity to make their lives and societies a heaven on earth using their own power and reason." For Jack the "fixer" junkie — a.k.a. Mr. "Don't tell me what I can't do!" — Locke the ironic "greater power" peddler in one way represents the cure for his fixer addiction — and in another way, the fixer addiction itself.

The atheists among us may blanch at the "greater power" cure for addiction, and we should note that the story of *Lost* has its own doubts about the matter. Locke is a parable for gullibility that asks: Even if there is a God, who's to say he's good? Who's to say he can be trusted? That said, *Lost* does seem to share AA's sober regard for mankind, too. The Island is filled with monuments to man's folly and hubris. The Black Rock. The Dharma Initiative. The Four Toed Statue. Jughead.

Of course, AA isn't about making people feel bad about themselves. It's about helping people get over their bad selves. AA is famous for its 12-step program, although it has been further summarized into six distinct stages. It is not an easy process, and many people fight it and reject it before submitting to it, if they submit at all. Indeed, that sentence is a succinct distillation of Jack's entire character arc so far in *Lost*. His six-season journey reflects the six stages of AA's recovery/redemption program — and his resistance to it.

STAGE 1: Admitting that one cannot control one's addiction or compulsion.

SEASON 1 JACK: Jack was confronted several times on his "fixer" issues and challenged to let go of them. He never admitted to anything, but key flashback moments revealed a man who recognized on some level he needed to be saved from himself, and had at least one sin (not disclosed until Season 3) to atone for. (See: "Do No Harm," in which he went to desperate, reckless lengths to save Boone's life; the flashback.)

STAGE 2: Recognizing a greater power that can give strength.

SEASON 2 JACK: Jack fought repeatedly with Locke on the whole "greater power" thing and only begrudgingly relented to Locke's worldview. (See: "Orientation")

STAGE 3: Examining past errors with the help of a sponsor (experienced member).

SEASON 3 JACK: The season premiere, "A Tale of Two Cities," was a one-stop metaphor for addict intervention, cold turkey rehab, and tough-love sponsorship. It's worth reviewing. Jack was incarcerated in a drained-out Hydra Station aquarium and was slowly broken down by Juliet, a fellow captive and addict-in-her-own-way but capable of speaking wisdom into Jack's life. The flashback story revealed Jack's most shameful act as a compulsive fixer: Obsessed with the failure of his marriage to Sarah — and convinced his father was romantically involved with her — Jack went to a hotel determined to bust up a rendezvous, but instead found Christian...at an AA meeting. Turned out that Sarah wasn't sleeping with Christian — she was trying to get him some help. Jack's paranoid persecution of his father derailed Christian's redemption/sobriety bid and led to the Down Under bender that killed him and sent Jack on his life-changing/addict-rehabbing adventure through time, space, and self. The episode includes an odd, poignant bit — Jack hearing his father's voice through a non-functioning intercom, telling him to "let it go" — that played like a beyond-the-grave exhortation/forgiveness from his deceased dad.

The ultimate goal of AA is to send recovering addicts back out into the world committed to living out its "sobriety prayer," also known as the Serenity Prayer: "God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference." Jack seemed (emphasis intentional) to espouse this prayerful spirit following his Hydra drunk tank detox, even as he found himself in crisis situations that demanded he play the role of hero-fixer. But his brilliant success at saving and springing Kate and Sawyer ("I Do") and defeating Ben's beach invasion ("Through the Looking Glass") only ended up enflaming and affirming his old fixer pathology — a slow backslide into relapse. Of course, that characterization presumes Jack had actually changed. Hence the emphasis on seemed. More likely, Jack faked much of his "change of heart," like a junkie faking his way through rehab so he can fulfill the requirements of getting out — a familiar twist in rehab tales, both in real life and in fiction. In the season finale, "Through the Looking Glass," the story of Jack's greatest heroic triumph was juxtaposed with a flash-forward story that revealed the cost of giving over completely to his fix-it pathology: Full-blown chemical addiction and suicidal despair. Yet in his darkest moment, as he stood on the edge of a highway overpass appealing to heaven for a "greater power" for forgiveness, Jack found hope. He had finally hit rock bottom. The redemption of Jack Shephard could finally begin in earnest.



STAGE 4: Making amends for [past] errors.

SEASON 4 JACK: In his on-Island story, Jack refused to admit his error in summoning the freighter and became increasingly frantic, even desperate in his reckless, hero-drunken drive to be proven right and get the castaways off the Island. His partial success comes at great cost: death, abandonment, suffering. In his parallel off-Island story, Jack came to recognize the error of leaving the Island and committed to making amends for it. Again, this is tricky business for Jack the Fixer. When people think "making amends," they often think that means correcting past mistakes — fixing things. So making reparations risks reactivating his addiction pathology. Indeed, the addiction recovery model really stresses the importance of discernment during this phase. It requires being genuine in your motives (are you really trying to repair an injustice or just trying to clear your conscience?) and realistic about what can be accomplished. The classic example — and it's quite ironic, in light of what we're about to get into with Jack — is this: How does an alcoholic who has killed someone while driving drunk make amends? To borrow language from the Hazelden Addiction Treatment Center literature on the matter, making direct, literal amends for this sin would require "unkilling" someone — and that's impossible.

Now, that last sentence is pretty damn ironic, given where we're headed with Jack's redemption/recovery story. Before we get into it, though, consider these words from Hazelden's official literature, and consider how uncannily relevant they are to the Season 5 Jughead story line: "What are the benefits of making amends? If we've continually harmed people and haven't made any effort toward amends, then we've got a lot of people, places, and things to avoid. Large areas of life become closed off to us. When you're willing to make amends, those areas open up again. You don't have to avoid people any more. This is true not only for people in recovery but for all of us. The book *Alcoholics Anonymous* mentions the promises of recovery. 'If we are painstaking about this phase of our development,' it says, 'we will be amazed before we are half way through. We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness. We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace.'"

STAGE 5: Learning to live a new life with a new code of behavior.

SEASON 5 JACK: A truly humbled Jack finally realized that his own strength was not only insufficient, but deeply flawed, and appealed to the "greater power" of his castaway community (and fellow recovering addicts) and converted to a whole new world view — faith in the "greater power" of the Island. (See: "316")

Back on the Island, a conspicuously, suspiciously serene Jack seemed (again with the conspicuous stressing!) determined to live out the chief values of the sobriety prayer: acceptance; change; discernment. Those three values were dramatized via the central question of last season's time travel storyline: Is the past something that is fixed and must be accepted ("whatever happened, happened"), or is it pliable and changeable? Jack waited on the Island to give him wisdom on what to do. Notice Jack's discernment on the matter. He passed on the opportunity to save Young Ben by performing surgery, believing the boy's fate was beyond his control — an expression of acceptance that stood in seemingly healthy contrast to his feverish, reckless handling of the Boone crisis in season 1. Jack then thought he got the Island epiphany he was looking for when Daniel Faraday showed up with his

audacious Jughead gambit. But I think Jughead was a temptation that Jack the "greater power"-trusting, Counter Enlightenment-reconstructed, recovering fixer addict should have resisted. Faraday arrived preaching the Enlightenment gospel of "the Variable" — that men are free radicals capable of mastering their circumstances through force of free will. Put another way: Faraday was tempting Jack to re-embrace his old code of behavior. And he did.

But more than anything, Jack was enticed by the proposed "benefits" of Faraday's plan: Negation. Avoidance. A literal clean slate. A chance to clear his conscience; a chance to erase himself from people's lives; a chance to do the impossible and "unkill" all the people he couldn't save. Yet this is not the way to recovery for Jack. Again, according to AA, part of the benefit to the recovering addict of making amends should be the liberation from regret. This is done by living with knowledge of the past, not destroying it. My guess is that Jughead will provide Jack with the illusion of relief from his "issues," but in reality, they've only been momentarily suppressed. Eventually, they will come back, harder and stronger than ever, like the many headed Hydra that grows two more ugly, biting noggins back after losing one. True atonement, lasting restoration requires a day-to-day, even minute-to-minute commitment to change. Jack the Addict must find a way to live day to day, with grace for his past, wisdom for his present, hope for his future. Only then might he be able to fulfill the sixth and final phase of recovery:

STAGE SIX: Helping others that suffer from the same addictions or compulsions.

SEASON 6 JACK: TBD, of course. I believe Season 6 will complete the project of recovery and redemption that Lost has been telling through Jack and so many other characters. And I also think it will tell the story of how Reconstructed Jack will find a way to help one man in particular, someone who suffers from addictions similar to his own: his alcoholic father. How will Jack do that, especially since Christian Shephard is, like, dead? I'll explain next week as I begin unspooling My Final Theory of Lost, which compared to this week's column, will be much more geektastically fun and considerably less...boring. Thanks for hanging in there with me, folks. Comments and complaints can be posted below or sent to [docjensenew@gmail.com](mailto:docjensenew@gmail.com). Also, follow me on Twitter @ewdocjensen.

Namaste! Doc Jensen