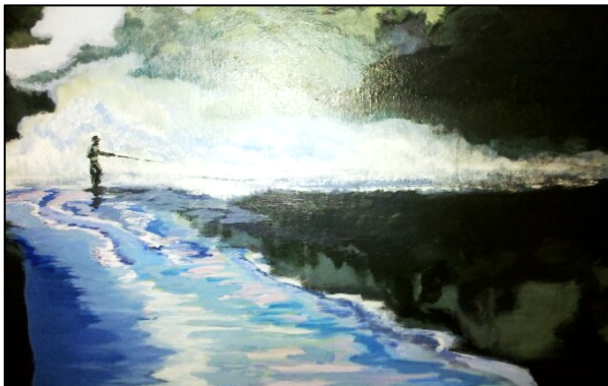


SOMETHING HAD TO GIVE

It begins this way for a lot of us: Fresh off his first stint at rehab, Kenny was on the job early and blind drunk by 11:00am. He was not living his values and not living his vision – which had been to ease into life after rehab working part-time as a sous chef and part-time on his recovery. “I was trying to do the deal, but not doing what it takes to stay sober,” he says. “Work had found out what I could do and wanted me to take on more and more responsibility. Apparently I couldn’t say no. My recovery deteriorated fast.”



As the emergency S.W.A.T. was dragging him out and off to the psych ward, he screamed, ‘I just want to change!’ His boss yelled back: “You’re working on Monday, Kenny.”

As a kid, preparing meals at home was sweet together-time for Ken and his family, but his father was a surgeon and the son of a surgeon. Consciously or unconsciously, it was implied that he’d go into medicine - and that preparing meals was an enjoyable hobby, not a vocation.

He pursued other interests, studying cultural anthropology and Middle Eastern archeology – and drinking as he pleased, which was heavy and often. Later, working on a field dig in Syria, his mentor laid out the future as he saw it: In order to go anywhere in that field, Ken would need to be a PhD. Heard that one before. No dice.



Listening to his heart, he began formal studies at The Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park in New York, graduating with honors. Proving gifted, he went on to study pastry and confectionary arts and eventually launched a successful career as an executive chef. It was glamorous but extremely stressful work. Alcohol helped to cope, but he was hemorrhaging. “There are pressures from the immediacy of the work. If you’re preparing a meal for 150 people and its not done by 12pm when they’re ready to eat, its evidence of a lack of performance.” His employer intervened with a “strong suggestion” he get help.

Kenny was a Retreat guest three times before something inside him gave. “At rehab I really thought that I was going to right myself. I was shocked that I couldn’t make it happen.” He went to live in a sober house, got part-time consulting work and began to put recovery principles into practice in his life in earnest. Things began to change. He wasn’t just coping

and life was becoming really enjoyable.

Compelling opportunities showed up, including coming back to The Retreat -- but this time as a staff, spearheading dining services. Being the Executive Chef at The Retreat is a trifecta for Kenny, where he plugs-in his gifts as a chef, a cultural anthropologist and as a person living recovery principles. Today, he’s also a husband, father, sportsman and artist – and grateful to be of service working in a place where he can be true to himself and live the principles he believes in.