



MORE THAN **MEALS ON APPEALS** ?

Uncovering the Next Rescue Mission Offer ●

The meal appeal.

It's been around for years.

The results of our
independent national study
might surprise you.

BrewerDirect

WHAT MATTERS MOST

☰ **\$1.79** ■

Analytical Ones is a data analytics and research firm focusing their expertise and attention exclusively within the charitable, nonprofit world.

Joe Churpek was the lead analyst for our project. Joe is a primary research professional who has conducted surveys and focus groups for a diverse client list, including top national brands, state and local governments, private healthcare agencies and charitable organizations. As a Survey Specialist for RTI International, one of the world's premier research institutes, he assisted the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in conducting the largest survey of health care costs in the United States.

Utilizing a Master's degree in Applied Sociology, Joe has worked on the agency side as a direct response analyst, conducting customer segmentation, lifetime value and benchmarking studies for nonprofit organizations.



Joe Churpek
PARTNER, ANALYTICAL ONES



Randy Brewer
PRESIDENT/CEO

Randy Brewer has spent nearly 30 years pouring his heart and his head into raising funds for and channeling resources into faith-first, nonprofit organizations around the world. It's his calling and his passion.

He founded Brewer Direct in 2004, and as President/CEO, his leadership has resulted in hundreds of millions of dollars raised and hundreds of thousands of new donors acquired for compassion-based ministries across the United States.

In his free time, Randy serves on the board of African Enterprise USA, an evangelistic relief and development ministry in Africa. He also actively sponsors and is closely involved in the lives of 11 children in 3 developing countries through two other charities: ByGrace Children's Home and World Harvest International.



Shellie Speer
EXECUTIVE VP OF CLIENT STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT

Shellie Speer has been working side-by-side with Rescue Mission clients for over 30 years. Before joining Brewer Direct, her heart for the homeless and hurting led her to found ENEX GROUP, an agency she owned and served as President for over 23 years.

As Executive VP of Client Strategic Development, she focuses on helping clients raise funds by building stronger development programs. Her vision for an integrated donor communications model has empowered nonprofits across the country to set in motion successful development plans that strengthen their financial foundations and partnerships within the community.



Lolly Colombo
VP/CLIENT SERVICE LEAD

Lolly Colombo has worked on both the agency and client side, serving some of the world's most beloved charities and faith-based organizations, including The Salvation Army, Operation Blessing International, Food for the Hungry, International Fellowship of Christians and Jews, CBN, and In Touch Ministries, enabling her to provide an exceptional experience for Brewer Direct clients.

As VP/Client Service Lead, she utilizes her extensive experience in direct response marketing, Spanish language outreach and broadcast media to bring our nonprofit partners cutting-edge strategies for integrated, multi-channel fundraising.



We wanted answers to
A BIG QUESTION...

BREWER DIRECT COMMISSIONED ANALYTICAL ONES TO CONDUCT A NATIONWIDE STUDY
OF BOTH RESCUE MISSION DONORS AND THE NATIONAL PROSPECT MARKET.
THE STUDY RESULTS WERE COMPILED IN MARCH 2017.

BREWER DIRECT'S PRESIDENT/CEO RANDY BREWER, EXECUTIVE VP OF CLIENT STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT
SHELLIE SPEER AND VP OF CLIENT SERVICE LOLLY COLOMBO
(WITH SUPPORT FROM ANALYTICAL ONES' JOE CHURPEK) PRESENTED THE RESULTS AT THE ANNUAL
ASSOCIATION OF GOSPEL RESCUE MISSIONS (AGRM) CONFERENCE IN MAY 2017.

BrewerDirect

Does the MEAL still APPEAL?



WHAT FOLLOWS ARE THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY...



METHODOLOGY

COLLECTING THE DATA

This research involved the use of two corresponding eSurveys. One was fielded for 12 participating organizations. The other was an at-large prospect study conducted among Rescue Mission donors.

eSURVEY ANALYSIS STATS



12

Participating
Organizations



2,681

Donors Responded



At-Large Prospect Study
(n=200)



Fielded
February 2017



Results Compiled
March 2017

"With almost 3,000 Missions donors nationwide responding to this survey, it allows us to do some really interesting things in the way we randomize the questions they receive, as well as split out their responses meaningfully to dig deep into the potential insights we could find."

- JOE CHURPEK
PARTNER, ANALYTICAL ONES



RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

- Discover **differences in values and preferences** among emerging audiences*
- Look intently at **splits by age/market**
 - 65+ donors vs. 18-65 donors
 - Geographic location
 - Donor response vs. general-market
 - Social Services prospect response
- Better understand donor **perceptions of images and stories**
- Gain insight into donor **preferences for various Rescue Mission services** (as well as their likelihood and level of generosity in supporting a particular offer)
- Set a data-driven course for **testing new offers** to replace "\$1.79 for 1 meal"

(our #1 objective in this study)

"I once joked that instead of 'What's the Next Offer?' this study could've been called, 'Does Recovery Work as an Offer?' That's really what we wanted to know."

- JOE CHURPEK
PARTNER, ANALYTICAL ONES

*Note: We viewed donors older than 65 and younger than 65 so that we can determine what generational differences there might be, as well as examine the differences between prospect responses and donor responses.

IMAGE ASSOCIATIONS

WHICH IMAGES MATCH YOUR PERCEPTION OF WHO IS HELPED BY THE RESCUE MISSION?



Five unique images were shown to individuals receiving Rescue Mission services



Images were selected to represent diverse ages & backgrounds



Donors were probed regarding their immediate assumptions about each picture



We made the study diverse in terms of the age of the person in the picture, as well as the ethnic background of each of the individuals. Notice that we did not include any women or children to limit the amount of variables studied.

Why did we ask this question?

1

No right or wrong answer.

Open-ended impression exercises are useful in getting respondents in the right headspace to think about the Rescue Mission.

In-depth research like this requires that you get your respondents in the right headspace and get them thinking about all the things surrounding Missions that you want them to think about... so it's good to start with a question where there's no right or wrong answer, but where they can use their own imagination.

2

People love pictures.

A significant portion of the human brain is dedicated to visual processing and this processing leads us – within milliseconds – to value perceptions and emotional response. Images either attract or distract.

3

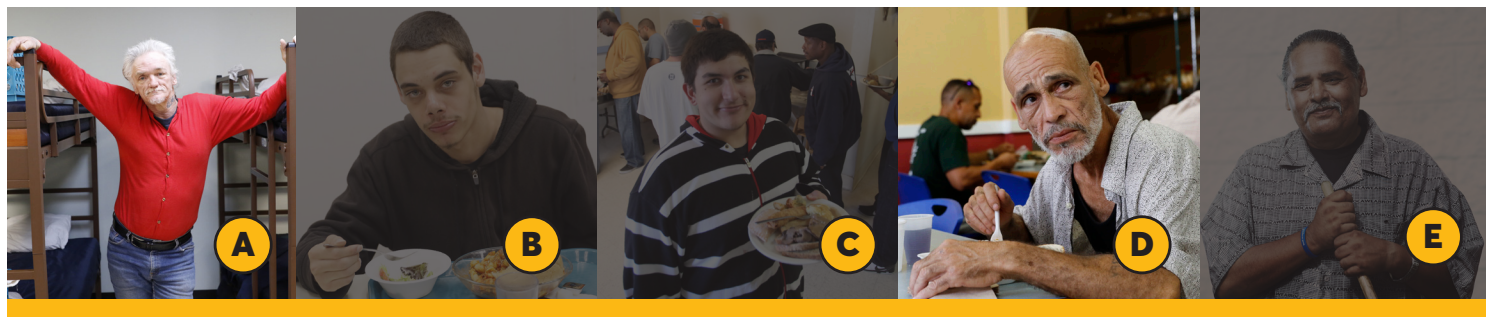
An effective direct response offer exists with copy and images in combination.

And they are meant to be considered together.

Any marketing channel is going to have a combination of words and pictures, so it's important to understand the relationship between the image and offer in order to figure out the best path forward in discovering new and successful offers.

IMAGE PERCEPTION

All respondents were asked, on a scale of 1-5, for each of these five pictures:



Q: HOW CLOSELY DID THE IMAGE ABOVE MATCH YOUR PERCEPTION OF WHO IS HELPED BY THE MISSION?

Photos A and D received the highest marks. See Insight #1 for more on this.

The images represent what donors expect to see if they were to visit the Mission. The two things they have in common here is that they are both older gentlemen and they both look more downtrodden.



NOTE: Photo C received the lowest marks in terms of who is perceived to be someone "helped by a Rescue Mission." By far, C is the image that was perceived as the least typical Rescue Mission client. See Insight #2 for more on this.

Additionally, when asked what kind of help or service the men in the photos might be receiving, the answers tied very closely to the photos themselves. Respondents noted "shelter" if the photo showed a man standing next to a bed, for example; and, they noted "meal assistance" if he was sitting down with a plate of food. See Insight #4.

Q: IN JUST A SENTENCE OR TWO, HOW DO YOU THINK THE RESCUE MISSION CAN HELP PROVIDE FOR THIS PERSON?

➤	PHOTOS A B	PHOTOS C D	PHOTO E
	SHELTER 54% 41%	MEAL 44% 52%	JOB ASSISTANCE 53%

insights

- 1 **Older and downtrodden** are the images that donors most closely associate with individuals receiving services from the Mission.
- 2 We see here and later in the survey that **young/happy images may even have a negative impact** on eliciting donor empathy.

Later in this study, it becomes evident that the young, smiling imagery might actually be harmful in terms of fundraising. It doesn't seem to inspire the type of generosity and desire to give that the more traditional imagery has.
- 3 The **activity in the picture is the primary driver** of initial assumptions.
- 4 There is **little difference between generational and prospect-donor splits for image associations.** (In other words, age and familiarity with the Rescue Missions seem to have little effect on these results.)

This should be considered good news for those who work in marketing for these organizations. **The values aren't really changing that much by generation.** In terms of what they value in the organization, it's very similar.

COMBINING IMAGE & STORY

5 diverse images were randomly matched for each respondent with 1 of 5 stories representing different client histories and Mission services.*



STORIES

● = PROBLEM ● = SOLUTION

Jason became **homeless as a result of a drug conviction and prison time.**
He has been **living at the Mission and participating in the recovery program for 4 weeks.**

John is **disabled and lives on the streets.**
He relies on **hot meals and a bed on cold nights from the Mission.**

Jonah is **cognitively impaired from a work-related accident and lives on the streets.**
He just enjoyed a **hot Thanksgiving meal at the Mission.**

Manuel came to the Mission **homeless with a drug addiction.**
He has been in the **Mission's recovery program for 6 months.**

Robert **lost his job and became homeless after an automobile accident.**
He currently lives on the streets and hopes for a way back to a home and a job.

*The five images used are diverse in terms of age and background.

Q: TAKE A LOOK AT THESE 5 STORIES AND THEIR CORRESPONDING IMAGES.
WHO WOULD YOU SELECT TO SPONSOR IF GIVEN THE CHANCE?

METHODOLOGY: Once again, we selected five diverse images and paired them with five stories representing different client histories and the use of different Mission services. Randomly, for each respondent, we paired one story with one image. The respondents were asked to read these five stories with respective images, and they were asked to select the individual they would sponsor if they were given the opportunity. Via this analysis, we were able to determine which stories were selected most frequently, and whether the choice of story or the choice of picture was more meaningful.

If most people in fundraising today were asked, "What's more important, the image or the story?" most people would default to the image.



But our discovery here is that while the image is important, the most powerful aspect of the image/story combination is actually the story.

insights

1 When looking at the **image alone**, responders selected Photo C. The most unpopular photo was B, the younger man in the red shirt.

Photo C was about 20% more likely to be chosen in any random lineup or arrangement, while **Photo B was about 20% less likely to be chosen.**

2 When looking at the story alone and in combination with photos, **Robert's story was 70% more likely to be chosen than any other story**, regardless of which photo was paired with it. In this exercise, it was clear that the choice of story mattered significantly more than the picture.

more insights >

OF NOTE:

Photo B – the young, smiling man – **was less likely to be chosen than any other image; it didn't matter what story he was paired with.** Need-based photographs vs. recovery (smiling) photographs prevailed in generating more donor and prospect empathy.

Photo D – the young man not smiling – was the **single most popular combination** when paired with Robert's story.

3 Here's a crucial point, according to the study: **Donor empathy wanes when they begin judging the recipient of the services.** Donors and prospects both said they were more likely to give a gift when they learned that this person has fallen on hard times... that circumstances outside their control have impacted them.

How important is it to focus on the stumblings? Based on our results, it is more important to understand they are in need of help and not the initial cause.

CASE IN POINT: The two lowest picks, Jason and Manuel's stories, both mention drug addiction. The mention of drug use seems to really undercut the amount of support they received from the donor pool.

It might be prudent to resist the tendency to use that aspect of a person's story to drive the narrative when you want to highlight the Rescue Mission's addiction and recovery services.

4 **Key takeaway in storytelling:** Best practice in storytelling is to talk about a person's story in a way that generates empathy, and to only discuss the addiction and recovery services in a broader sense of Rescue Mission offerings. Try not to draw donors' empathy and concern by using addiction narratives.

*All stories and images were chosen/written by Brewer Direct.



STORIES

● = PROBLEM ● = SOLUTION

Jason

Jason became **homeless as a result of a drug conviction and prison time.** He has been **living at the Mission and participating in the recovery program for 4 weeks.**

John

John is **disabled and lives on the streets.** He relies on **hot meals and a bed on cold nights from the Mission.**

Jonah

Jonah is **cognitively impaired from a work-related accident and lives on the streets.** He just enjoyed a **hot Thanksgiving meal at the Mission.**

Manuel

Manuel came to the Mission **homeless with a drug addiction.** He has been in the **Mission's recovery program for 6 months.**



Robert

Robert **lost his job and became homeless after an automobile accident.** He **currently lives on the streets** and **hopes for a way back to a home and a job.**



#1 IMAGE + STORY

Robert lost his job and became homeless after an automobile accident. He currently lives on the streets and hopes for a way back to a home and a job.

RANKING PROGRAM IMPORTANCE

#1 STORY FOR BOTH MISSION DONORS AND THE GENERAL MARKET

Robert lost his job and became homeless after an automobile accident. He currently lives on the streets and hopes for a way back to a home and a job.

Donors and Prospects (called "market" in the sentence above) were asked to rank a list of different Rescue Mission programs in order of very important to unimportant.

insights

1 For both donors and prospects of any age, **providing shelter and meals came in as #1.** The base-level offer of "shelter and meals" is consistently the number-one most important service donors and potential donors see the Mission providing.

 The offer of shelter and meals is the most important program that both donors and prospects see the Rescue Mission providing.

2 Prospects ranked "faith-based, substance abuse recovery" less important than donors did, while giving "drug rehabilitation programs" a more important ranking.

The most committed and long-term Rescue Mission donors are really on board with the faith-based aspects. They also feel most passionately about the spiritual aspect of the programs.

Q: WHAT CONCEPT DO YOU FEEL MORE ACCURATELY REPRESENTS YOUR VIEW OF THE RESCUE MISSION?

METHODOLOGY: This question allows researchers to dig deeper into respondent assumptions about the Rescue Mission.

Donors and market respondents were asked to rank – on a sliding scale from not at all important to very important – how they felt about each of a series of different Missions programs. The programs were presented as contrasting concepts. **Respondents were asked to push the slider closer to the concept they felt more accurately represented their own views.**

So we pursued outcomes on the following program approaches: recovery vs. rescue; spiritual vs. material aid; save-a-life vs. solve-the-problem and shelter vs. long-term housing assistance.



RECOVERY vs. RESCUE



insights


1 All donor groups – 65+ donors and 18-65 donors – are really on board with “transformation.” Whereas the general market was a little bit more inclined to provide immediate food and shelter, established Missions’ donors understand and desire to be a part of recovery efforts too. These responses show that donors care about recovery. In fact, it’s central to why they give to the Rescue Mission.

NOTE: Prospects (or the market) are more about providing immediate food and shelter, while higher value donors (\$1,000+ and monthly givers) are more likely to be on board with recovery/transformation offers. Rescue offers may have worked well for bringing donors onto the file, but your long-term, highest value and most loyal donors are those that are interested in changing lives and long-term recovery.

2 **Rescue offers** are more often central to getting donors to contribute to the Rescue Mission in the first place.

The \$1.79 meal offer is very concrete... transactional... and easy to visualize in terms of the impact of each dollar. They understand how their money is being used.

3 **Recovery offers are harder to put into a concrete and transactional dollar value.** Possibly, the lack of success of the recovery offer in the past is not because donors don’t value transformation... it’s not because they don’t like it as much as feeding... it’s not because they don’t care... it is because the offer must be framed in a way that **makes the donor feel that their gift is making a measurable impact.**

 The number one way to make the recovery offer work will be to **quantify the impact** so that donors feel like they’re getting a good deal out of the money they give.

FEEDING vs. TRANSFORMATION

METHODOLOGY: Respondents are shown the story of Chris – a young man with substance abuse problems who was rehabilitated through Missions programs. Chris’ story is paired with one of six offers chosen randomly for each respondent. Respondents are asked how likely they are to give to the offer they are shown.

- BASIC MEALS
- HIGHER \$ MEALS
- MEALS FOR 1 PERSON
- CHANGE LIVES
- HIGHER \$ LIVES
- CHANGE 1 LIFE



Each offer has two parts:
a stewardship statement and a value statement.

MEALS OFFER STEWARDSHIP

How much a single meal costs



VALUE

How many can be fed with a specific gift amount (7, 12 and 1)



CHANGE LIVES OFFER STEWARDSHIP

The amount of every dollar that actually goes to the Rescue Missions’ services

VALUE

How a gift of \$\$\$ blesses men, women and children OR in the last offer, just Chris



FEEDING vs. TRANSFORMATION

Q: HOW LIKELY ARE YOU TO GIVE TO THE OFFER SHOWN?

COMBO	STEWARDSHIP STATEMENT	VALUE STATEMENT
BASIC MEALS	That's why I'm hoping you'll support our Mission today. A single meal at the Mission costs just \$#.##.	\$\$\$ can feed 7. Your gift of \$\$\$ provides 12 meals for our community's men, women and children. A gift of \$\$\$ would be a real blessing!
HIGHER \$ MEALS		Your gift of \$\$\$ can feed 12. Your gift of \$\$\$ provides 23 meals for our community's men, women and children. A gift of \$\$\$ would be a real blessing!
MEALS FOR 1 PERSON		\$\$\$ can feed Chris 7 meals. Your gift of \$\$\$ provides 12 meals. A gift of \$\$\$ would be a real blessing to Chris as he rebuilds his life.
CHANGE LIVES	That's why I'm hoping you'll support our Mission today. \$#.## of every dollar sent to the Rescue Mission goes directly to rebuilding broken lives.	Your gift of \$-15, \$-25 or \$-50 would be a real blessing to our community's men, women and children.
HIGHER \$ LIVES		Your gift of \$-25, \$-50 or \$-100 would be a real blessing to our community's men, women and children.
CHANGE 1 LIFE		Your gift of \$-15, \$-25 or \$-50 would be a real blessing to Chris as he rebuilds his life.

insights

- 1 For the most part, more donors were **likely to give to basic meals** – the \$1.79 offer.
- 2 The **changed lives offer** had a 3-5% lower index. The **higher dollar change lives offer** is actually 16% less likely to be chosen.
IMPORTANT! Here's a major generational difference between 18-65 donors vs. +65 donors...
- 3 Lower ask amounts **raised response for the +65 group**, BUT **lowered response for the 18-65 group**.

FEEDING vs. TRANSFORMATION

CONCLUSION

➤ LOWERING ASKS IN AN OFFER RAISES RESPONSE RATES ONLY FOR THE +65 AGE GROUP.

You can ask younger donors for more money because the value of a dollar in their mind is quite different. For those over 65, when you start asking for higher dollar amounts, the response rates and likelihood to give goes down. **For those under 65, it actually goes up.**

4 **Younger donors want to make an impact on the organization.** They understand intuitively that it takes a little bit of investment to make an impact – and that even \$20 doesn't go very far.

CONCLUSION

➤ STARTING WITH HIGHER ASKS IS A MORE SUCCESSFUL OFFER STRATEGY FOR YOUNGER DONORS.

5 In terms of the entire market – donors and prospects – this **same generational divide existed.**

CONCLUSION

➤ IT'S IMPORTANT TO CONSIDER HOW TO MOVE FORWARD WITH ACQUISITION, KEEPING IN MIND HOW TO BEST APPROACH YOUNGER DONORS.

insights THE CRUX OF OFFERING RECOVERY

18-65



High dollar asks for meals results in a higher likelihood to give

BUT

Higher dollar asks for changing lives results in a lower likelihood to give



\$1.79

How does this show

why the recovery offer isn't currently working?

With a recovery offer, these younger donors don't see the impact of their dollar. So when you ask them for more dollars, it makes them less likely to give... they don't understand what that dollar is buying or how it is being used.

IN ORDER FOR THE RECOVERY OFFER TO WORK, DONORS MUST UNDERSTAND WHAT THE DOLLAR IS BUYING.

This means answering questions like:

- How do you quantify how their dollar is going to change lives?
- Do you quantify the cost in materials?
 - + A night's stay
 - + The cost of books
 - + The cost of a bed for a week
- Do you quantify the cost in lives saved?
 - + Number of graduates coming out of their long-term rehabilitation programs
- Do you quantify the impact on society or on the community directly?
 - + Getting someone off the streets
 - + Keeping someone out of jail
 - + Getting someone back onto the job market

insights + NEXT STEPS: QUANTIFYING IMPACT

Mission donors believe in and desire transformational recovery services. It's not that they don't care about them; they care about them a lot.

That's part of what makes them different from your typical human services donor... Rescue Mission donors give because they want to see a changed person at the end (as opposed to food bank donors, who aren't necessarily concerned with transformation).

THE PRIMARY HINDRANCE TO THE RECOVERY OFFER IS QUANTIFYING IMPACT IN A WAY THAT MAKES DONORS FEEL THEY MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

How do we propose quantifying that impact?

action items

Test new value propositions with an emphasis on concrete impact, such as:

- 1 **Number of new graduates coming out of a rehabilitation program**
- 2 **Cost of one night's stay**
- 3 **Cost of putting an individual through a program**
- 4 **Job placements**

insights + NEXT STEPS: YOUNGER DONORS

Younger donors want to make an impact on the organization. They understand intuitively that it takes a little bit of investment to make an impact – and that even \$20 doesn't go very far. **They are more likely to give to a rescue offer than a recovery offer.**

IT TAKES A HIGHER GIFT VALUE FOR YOUNGER DONORS TO FEEL THEY ARE MAKING AN IMPACT.

How do we propose approaching these younger donors?

action item

Test aggressively higher ask-strings on acquisition for younger donors using an age append or by list qualities and use a rescue offer to bring them in the door.

insights + NEXT STEPS: COMBINING IMAGE & STORY

THE RIGHT STORY IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE IMAGERY IN FOSTERING EMPATHY. HOWEVER, THEY ARE MOST POWERFUL IN COMBINATION.

Rescue Missions need to tell stories that **don't dwell on the subject's shortcomings**. A story focused on shortcomings undercuts the empathy readers feel toward the person featured in the story.

Addiction rehabilitation is considered a very important program for Rescue Missions. **HOWEVER...** addiction has a strong negative impact on donor empathy, except for a small group who can personally relate to an addiction story.

RESIST THE LOGIC OF USING THE SUBJECT'S STORY OF PERSONAL ADDICTION STRUGGLE AS A WAY TO INTRODUCE REHABILITATION SERVICES.

What resonates with donors in terms of stories and images is when **difficulties have been forced on the subject** of the story, not where they've gone wrong themselves. Do not focus on the subject's personal missteps or flaws. Consider digging deeper into the subject's story to find the hurt or affliction at the root of the addiction. Donors connect much better when they understand that the addiction was not just a poor choice or a path of rebellion, but rather rooted in something that was **beyond their control and for which they were a victim**.

WRITE STORIES EMPHASIZING HOW THE SUBJECT HAS BEEN DEALT HARDER BLOWS THAN THE REST OF US IN LIFE AND HOW THEY COULD USE OUR SUPPORT. AN APPROACH WITH THIS SPIRIT GENERATES MORE EMPATHY FROM DONORS FOR THOSE RECEIVING RESCUE MISSION SERVICES.

How do we propose telling stories that compel donors to give?





action items

1 Choose stories with a heroic subject

Someone who displays courage, determination and is beating the odds.

2 Avoid images that inhibit empathy

Such as the young/happy combination. Donors wonder why a young, seemingly happy person needs their assistance.

3 Focus stories on the environmental pressures beyond the individual's control

Describe what forced them off-track, and then speak to how they've benefited from the Rescue Mission on their path to life-change and recovery.



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Like what you're reading? Consider a partnership with Brewer Direct.

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WHAT MATTERS MOST

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