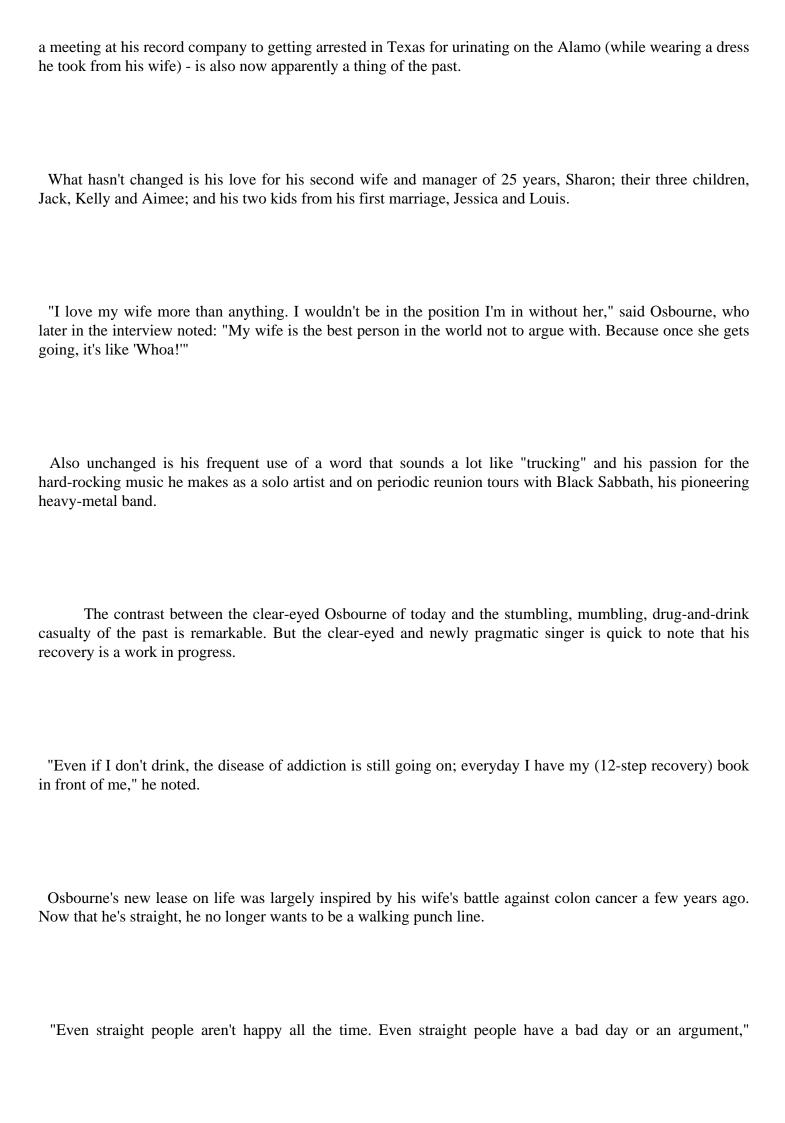
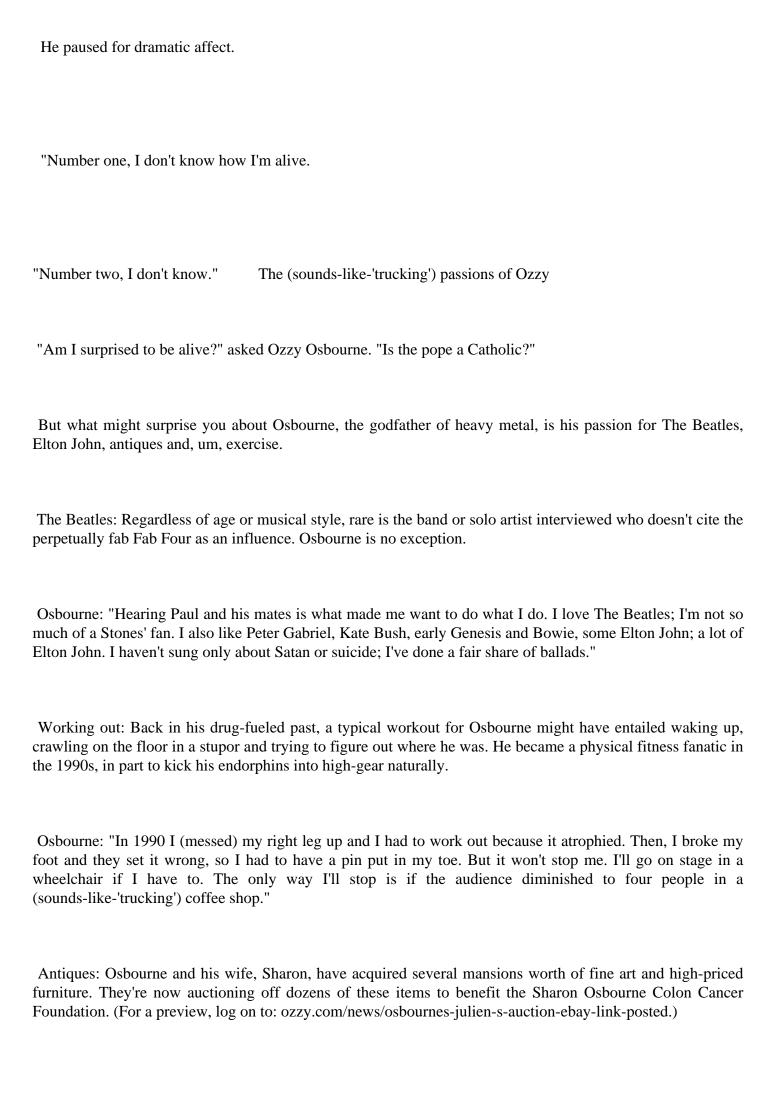
## Osbourne wants people to take him seriously these days by George\_Varga Sober and happy at 59, Ozzy Osbourne feels stronger and more focused than ever. "I'm not bragging," he said, "but I've overdosed quite a few times and I didn't die." OZZY OSBOURNE - Sober and happy at 59, Ozzy Osbourne feels stronger and more focused than ever. CNS Photo courtesy of MSO. Even by rock's brain-shriveling standards of debauched self-abuse, Osbourne repeatedly set a new standard. But no more. Clean and sober for the past two years, he sounded like a new man during a phone interview recently from a concert tour stop in Montana. His speech, which was often slurred almost beyond comprehension, is now relatively clear. His thoughts, which used to seem addled on even his best days, are mostly lucid. His latest album, the rock-solid "Black Rain," is the first of his career that he recorded and wrote all the songs for without any chemical or alcoholic intake. "I don't drink or use drugs today. I don't even smoke cigarettes," said the 59-year-old singer. "I reckon nicotine is the hardest to give up; I've been in rehab with junkies who can get off of the smack, but they can't put the cigarettes down. "Somebody asked me, 'What would you have done if you couldn't have done the new album without alcohol or drugs?' I suppose then it would be time for me to call it quits. But this person on my recovery program team said: 'Ozzy's got a lot more years in him. It's not a sin to ask for help." Accordingly, his first radio hit in years is titled "I Don't Wanna Stop" (sample lyric: I'm like a junkie without an addiction). And his once infamously batty behavior - which ranged from biting the head off a pigeon during



Osbourne observed.
"But what I am getting sick and tired of is, well, I've been sober for a couple of years now and I want people to take me seriously. Because I used to be a piece of (sounds-like-'trucking') flesh and drool on the floor. And now that I've got my (sounds-like-'trucking') head out of the bottle and the bag and whatever (stuff) I was doing, I want people to take me seriously.
"I have a therapist, and he says: 'Look, do the math. How many years were you geting loaded?' I answer: 'Most of my life.' Then he asks: 'How long have you been clean?' People don't change because they got clean; you have to work at it."
Osbourne is now at work on a Broadway musical, his first. It's based on the life of Rasputin, an enigmatic Siberian mystic who was often referred to as "the Mad Monk" and lived a life as debauched as that of a rock star.
In the past, such a life of debauchery mirrored Osbourne's own. Today, he is embarked on a new chapter that could just change his future legacy for the better.
"I want to be remembered as a working-class hero, not for biting the head off a (sounds-like-'trucking') bird, or whatever it was," Osbourne said.
"Next year will be my 40th anniversary as a professional musician. I remember when the first Black Sabbath album came out (in 1970), and I thought: 'Oh, this will be good for a few years; I'll be able to afford a few beers and a bit of dope.'"



Osbourne: "When I get a bit of money I don't keep it; I buy a (sounds-like-'trucking') antique or something. I was recently looking at this ad in a magazine, and I said, 'That's my (sounds-like-'trucking') hand-carved pool table!' Sharon said, 'You don't play pool anymore.' And I said, 'Yeah, but it's my (sounds-like-'trucking') pool table!'''

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