



ALKI-LINE



TAKE ONE, IT'S FREE

The Area 11 A.A. Newsletter Vol. 27 No. 1 Feb. 2018 - Mar. 2018

At First You Don't Succeed

Many of us who start on the road to recovery in AA have trouble staying stopped. Why? I can only speak for myself and I'll try to keep it simple.

The son of an alcoholic father and a frightened mother, I was raised in a home full of secrets and shame trying to convince the rest of the world that nothing was wrong. I started drinking beer with my friends as a teen, but graduated to bourbon and drinking alone. In life, I did things I thought would make me happy, like putting myself through college, getting married, working 12-hour days to get ahead, buying a house, and having five children. All that wasn't enough, so I spent my spare time alone, drinking in my garage. As you might imagine, a quart-a-day habit made it difficult to hide my addiction and all the empty bottles. I errantly created the same home environment in which I grew up, never considering the impact on my wife and kids.

I finally started my AA journey when my Wall Street employer, for whom I had worked for 15 years, offered me two choices: participate in an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or be "shown the front door." I naturally opted to save my job and began the EAP regimen. I never got a sponsor, never did the steps and only went to meetings in New York City.....never near my home town. After a year and 6 months of "compliance", I went to a family reunion and, predictably, picked up one beer. Within three weeks, I was back to my quart-a-day habit. But it was worse. I started drinking 24-7, missing work regularly, being completely miserable and depressed and setting myself up to lose everything

I finally begged to go into a 28-day rehab, lost that coveted Wall Street Career and went on a journey which included both AA and several more periods of "not drinking". One of those periods was for five years, but by not staying spiritually fit, I relapsed over a stupid resentment. Fortunately, I had made good friends in AA after starting to go to meetings in my home town and establishing a home group. These friends "reeled me in" quickly after my relapses and, each time, I learned more about my defects/shortcomings and started doing the program as prescribed in the Big Book. I replaced "compliance" with "surrender." I stopped thinking that I was a martyr and feeling sorry for myself.

Rather, I realized that I was a very lucky survivor of potential death sentence - active, progressive alcoholism. I lost the wife and the house, but have been able to completely reinvent myself professionally through the help of my new friends and old colleagues who recognized the changes that had

occurred in me. I was no longer one who was forced to give up drinking, "dry" and miserable. I'm a new person with a relatively clean slate, determined to practice the twelve steps in all my affairs. My life is simpler and less contentious. I'm able to be a truly sober, reliable, and loving father, grandfather and friend by being a real, practicing member of Alcoholics Anonymous and staying in constant contact with my Higher Power. I pray for the same joy for all my fellow AA's. and any active alcoholic with a desire to stop drinking.

—Paul R.

Gratitude

Gratitude is the lifeblood of my AA program. It was not always that way. Before my last drink I had a very warped perception of reality. Though I had a loving wife, three beautiful children, a good job and many other blessings, I didn't see it that way. I thought my family was making my life harder, that my employer was treating me unfairly, that I was misunderstood by a world that seemed out to get me. I was full of fear and resentment, and anxiety that was getting worse as I continued to use.

Then a miracle happened. I woke up after a night of drinking and something was different. I didn't know it at the time but it was my moment of surrender. Though I had been "around" AA for years and thought I knew something about alcoholism, I began to hear and see for the first time. I became a "part of" my groups and began to see that I had so much to be grateful for. My wife should have left me, my employer should have fired me, I should have been locked up or found dead in the street but none of those things happened. The understanding that my Higher Power had always been there for me became strong, and I started to acknowledge Him. Nothing materially changed in my circumstances but my outlook was completely altered. As someone once said, "The key to being blessed is realizing that you are."

—Brian S.

"I Never Had It So Good"

The Big Book says that the promises "are being fulfilled among us-sometimes quickly sometimes slowly. They will always materialize if we work for them." I was behind the walls for 30 years. I went to A.A. with the hope that this was the answer. Now I am pretty much free and have a job. A quote from Rick.: "I never had it so good." The promises continue to materialize for me.

—Tim F. Meriden

4 Poems

Thy Will

Mental is between the ears
The physical's down below.
Spiritual wellbeing appears
While going with the flow.

We Can

Self-help can be a group endeavor
(I could have struggled alone)
to change tormented lives forever
by giving trouble a healthy tone.

Who?

When I didn't want to be me
I had no idea who I rejected.
Now I'm really glad to be
the man I finally selected.

Morning Inspection

When you see the connection
"tween you and that reflection
of your upper frontal section.
Pose for a winning projection.

—Tom T., *New Britain*

Winter of Sobriety

When I think back to my drinking days during the cold months it was always hot toddies or Irish Coffee to keep me warm. Sometimes it was snuggling up by the fire in the fireplace and having the warm drink of alcohol in my hand. It was bliss, but towards the end of my drinking it was not bliss but constant shakes, always cold, and trying to get sober. I remember going top shelf with cinnamon schnapps over ice and Mississippi Mud Slides. Looking back at those days and remembering how I felt, I was not honest, open-minded or willing. I was certainly not practicing the 12 Steps daily.

Now, after all the years of being sober, I keep myself busy with reading books or finishing my studies for college. I enjoy cooking new food and working at my nursing job caring for patients with dementia. I love going outside when it snows and making snow angels or just enjoying the falling snow. It is a miracle to me that each snow flake is unique and different. Coming inside I enjoy having coffee with a crumpet or sitting by the fire thinking about the marvelous year that I have had sober.

If I had kept drinking I would have passed out in the snow and developed frostbite or not have noticed all the great things about winter. I need to remember "One Day at a Time" and "God grant me the serenity, to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference."

—Susan B.

How to reach AA:
866-STEPS12

Para ponerse en contacto con AA, llame:
855-ESPANCT

The Twelve Steps of Insanity

1. We admitted we were powerless over nothing—that we could manage our lives perfectly and those of anyone who would allow us.
2. Came to believe that there was no power greater than ourselves and the rest of the world was insane.
3. Made a decision to have our loved ones turn their wills and their lives over to our care even though they couldn't understand us at all.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of everyone we knew.
5. Admitted to the whole world the exact nature of everyone else's wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to make others give us the respect we thought we deserved.
7. Demanded others do our will because we were always enlightened.
8. Made a list of all persons who had harmed us and became willing to go to any lengths to get even with them all.
9. Got direct revenge on such people wherever possible except when to do so would cost us our lives or at the very least a jail sentence.
10. Continued to take inventory of others and when they were wrong promptly told them about it.
11. Sought through complaining and medication to improve our relations with others as we could not understand them at all, asking only that they do things our way.
12. Having had a complete physical, emotional and spiritual breakdown as a result of these steps, we tried to blame others and to get sympathy and pity in all our affairs.

—Author unknown

Weather The Storm

Like the sea
the current is strong
waves flow over me
emotions last long

Fast and flowing
I can't deal
the winds are blowing
I don't want to feel

I turn to the bottle
without the ship
I just gave up the lotto
but I don't take a sip

Calm at last
the waves have settled
that was the past
the storm is weathered

—Angie K., *New Haven*

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RENT-A-SPONSOR

- Are you tired of being told like it is?
- Still looking for that easier, softer way?
- Had enough of that same old time-tested direction?

No Reading! No Writing! No Deadlines!

STANDARD FEATURES INCLUDE:

- *Listening to your sniveling without constant reference to the Big Book or Steps!
- *Co-signing your excuses and rationalizations!
- *Working only the Steps you want, in the order you choose!
- *Learning the secret of giving it away before you even have it!
- *Talking the talk, without walking the walk!
- *Looking good, rather than feeling good!

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"Staying Sober on War Stories Alone"!

—Bryan H.

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Waiting

You call me grasping, almost like you can't breathe.
And you can't stop. You're in the grips of it now.
Morning shakes, grabbing the bottle, trying for comfort.
At least you are telling me how you feel trapped.

Please, hit bottom before you die, I pray.
Spirit guides, tell my friend's spirit guides
To guide her to these rooms.
Creative intelligence, will you help her?
Is she ready for help?
I can't yet give you what I have.
But I am saving a seat for you.
It will help me to help you.
If you let me. If you ask me.

For I am you and you are me.
If you die, part of me dies too.
I pray you find these rooms.

—Amy L., Hartford

How to Get to Berlin Street

Sunny days
Sweepin' the fear away
On my way to where the air is sweet
Can you tell me how to get
How to get to Berlin Street
Come and stay
Everything's A-ok
I tried to do it my own way
But I messed up my whole life and now I am doing it your
way

Come and stay at the Cromwell Radisson
They will meet you all the way
Can you tell me how to get
How to get to Berlin Street

Come and stay
Everything's A-ok
Friendly Alcoholics there
That's where we meet
Can you tell me how to get
How to get to Berlin Street
How to get to Berlin Street

—Beth

Liquid Monster

I drank too much to see
what was truly me.
I'm scared of what's inside
monsters, they will hide.

My disease is very patient
that is blatant.
I'm never without a drink
because I don't want to think.

All I want is to be alone
and I refuse to pick up the phone.
Secrets keep me sick
but my walls are built so thick.

I hide behind a turtle shell
because I don't want to tell
what lurks deep inside
my emotions flow like high tide.

I can see it in your eyes
that you are clearly high.
I feel like I'm alone
even when you're there.
It's not fair
that I'm the only one who cares.

I used my booze like a mask
always hiding, never doing the assigned task.
I need the escape
like Harry Potter hiding under his cape.

I really don't want to feel
because I'm terrified, but I know I need to heal.

I need to have the right attitude
The attitude of gratitude.
In order for this to work
I mustn't be a jerk.
To be the best person I can be for my son, but especially for
me.

—Angie K., New Haven

Today Matters Most

I cannot change yesterday but I can take charge of today, right here, right now. I have the ability and the passion for setting a new course in any area of my life. I do not look back on successes or failures of the past but I choose instead to live in the now. I create my day, moment by moment, with each decision, thought, prayer, and action I take. I move forward each day confident that I have the resources and ability to express divine love and wisdom. I listen and follow divine guidance as I create my day. All that I do brings blessings to me and to the world one day at a time, starting now.

—Jim S., Waterbury

Support Group

Acceptance of someone else is an expression of love. We all know what it feels like to be judged, and it's not unconditional love. To support means to keep from weakening or failing, to strengthen, endure, tolerate, to give aid or courage to, give approval to, give strength to. Listening to others in the rooms patiently is a gift that everyone, including the newcomer is able to give. AA is a support group. We all need to be heard and supported.

Sometimes this takes patience. The speaker may be confused or nervous about what they're trying to say. They may be talking too long and not leaving time for others to share. Some of us are more egocentric than others, especially when we're new to the rooms. We all need support. AA meetings are where we get our strength to stay sober another day. Our primary purpose is to stay sober, and to help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety. Let's keep the spirit of tolerance alive in all of us. Everyone has days when they need the grace of tolerance, encouragement, and prayer.

—Bryan H.

A New Year

All the holiday activities have come to an end. So what are your plans for the new year? Good time to clean house and to welcome a new season. Alcoholics Anonymous taught me that every so often one has to clean house. So why not choose the four seasons? Any situation that arises for us needs to be talked about with our God, clergy or sponsor (people we trust). It clears the cobwebs from our heads and gives us a fresh start to a wonderful new year.

Happy cleaning for the season.

—Your AA friend from district 7

Responsibility Pledge

I am responsible.
When anyone, anywhere
reaches out for help,
I want the hand of AA
always to be there.

And for that,
I am responsible!

Save The Date

Northeast Regional AA Service Assembly

February 23 - 25, 2018
Radisson Hotel, 100 Berlin Road, Cromwell
Registration: www.neraasa2018.org

Women's Day in Recovery

March 17, 2018 — Check-in begins at 8:00 am
Central Connecticut State University Student Center
1615 Stanley Street, New Britain

Grape Jam of the North 2018

March 31, 2018 — Begins at 6:30 pm
Historic Powder Mill Barn
32 South Maple Street, Hazardville (Enfield)

Pre-Conference Assembly

April 8, 2018 — 8:00 am - 3:30 pm
VFW Hall, 41 Veterans Drive, New Britain

We Want To Hear From You!

Share your stories, essays, articles, poetry, etc... with others through the Alki-Line.

We are accepting submissions of one page or less:

Email: alki-line@ct-aa.org

Mail: Alki-Line, 112 E. Main St, Meriden, CT 06450

Hand material to a GSR

¡Queremos saber más de Usted!

Mándenos las historias personales, los ensayos, las opiniones, la poesía, etc... y entérenos más de usted en el Alki-Line.

Se puede entregar una página o menos de las historias a una de las siguientes:

Por el correo electrónico: alki-line@ct-aa.org

Por el correo: Alki-Line, 112 E. Main St, Meriden, CT 06450

O De mano: a su GSR or Representativo de Alki-Line

Alki-Line

This newsletter is by and for alcoholics; however, we review submissions by all interested in the AA program of recovery. Material may be edited for clarity and length.

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