



ALKI-LINE



TAKE ONE, IT'S FREE

The Area 11 A.A. Newsletter Vol. 27 No. 3 Jun. 2018 - Jul. 2018

Spiritual Awakening

I climbed up the stairs into a large room above the carwash. It was the Open Door Club in Waterbury and among the half dozen people there, only one was a woman. I walked up to her and said, "I don't know if I am in the right place." She asked, "Do you have a problem with drinking?" I said yes and she told me to pull up a chair.

When the meeting started and it was my turn to share, I said my name and that I didn't know if I was an alcoholic or not. I then told my horrific story that got me there. After I finished, I said, "Who the heck am I kidding? I am an alcoholic." Everyone clapped their hands. I couldn't believe they applauded me for being a drunk.

I was given the Big Book and went home and started reading it. I got to "How It Works" in Chapter 5 and read the 12 Steps for the first time. I had a spiritual awakening. I said, "I could do this." I went from a hopeless drunk to a hopeful drunk.

It has been a glorious life of sobriety for the most part and I have made a lot of long lasting A.A. friends along the way. One day at a time and keep it simple my friends.

—Lorraine M., Naugatuck

Despertar Espiritual

Subí las escaleras hacia un cuarto grande sobre el lavado de autos. Era el Open Door Club en Waterbury y entre la media docena de personas allí, solamente una era mujer. Yo caminé hacia ella y le dije, "Yo no sé si estoy en el lugar correcto." Ella preguntó, "¿Tienes problema con la bebida?" Yo dije que sí y ella me dijo que acercara una silla.

Cuando la reunión comenzó y era mi turno para compartir, yo dije mi nombre y que no sabía si yo era una alcohólica o no. Luego yo conté mi historia horrorosa que me llevó hasta allí. Después de haber terminado, yo dije, "¿A quién quiero engañar? Yo soy una alcohólica." Todos aplaudieron. Yo no podía creer que ellos me aplaudieron por ser una borracha.

Me dieron el Libro Grande y me fui a casa y comencé a leerlo. Llegué a "Cómo Funciona" en el capítulo cinco y leí los 12 Pasos por primera vez. Tuve un despertar espiritual. Yo dije, "Yo puedo hacer esto." Pasé de ser una borracha sin esperanzas a ser una borracha esperanzada.

En la mayor parte ha sido una vida gloriosa de sobriedad y en el camino he hecho bastantes amistades duraderas dentro de A.A. Un día a la vez y manténganlo simple mis amigos.

—Lorraine M., Naugatuck

On the Human Condition

We are as He had long intended
Perfect in our imperfection
Destination open-ended
Prey to natural selection

Mastering that precious gift
Precious beyond measure
Through introspection we must sift
Then cultivate our treasure

And if we lose our way at times
Or seeming so, at least
Turn granite crusted deep in rime
Fall victim to the beast

Still every pitfall draws us near
And always when we walk through fear
Another ray comes from above
To move us toward His perfect love.

—Ryan S. East Hampton

No Reservations

Soon after hitting a devastating bottom, I was asked to read "How It Works" at the opening of one of my first A.A. meetings. Even though I read the statement, "Some of us have tried to hold on to our old ideas and the result was nil until we let go absolutely"; I still had trouble believing that all of my best efforts at rationalization i.e.- tapering schedules, geographic cures, changing jobs, just one more were insufficient to get me to stop drinking and using drugs or at least convert me to a "normal" drinker. In fact, I asked my family doctor to refer me to a psychiatrist with the belief that I would learn the secrets of how to alter my behaviors and learn to drink responsibly. Clutching my old ideas tightly has resulted in relapses and I am lucky and grateful to have made it back to the rooms.

An online dictionary defines a reservation as a qualification or the setting of limiting conditions to an expression of agreement or approval. Yes, I was hesitant to join a group of drunks because I thought my situation was unique. I was uneasy about entrusting my will to a power greater than myself,

skeptical that using the tools of A.A. would keep me sober and objected to "suggestions" that I go to meetings, get a sponsor and change everything. I was still determined to do things my way and, as a result, alcohol and drugs have almost ruined my life, have almost taken away those who love me and had left me spiritually and morally bankrupt.

Chapter 3 of the Big Book tells us that if we want to stop drinking, we can have no reservation of any kind, nor any lurking notion that someday we will be immune to alcohol. What changed for me was that as I continued to attend A.A. meetings, I began to see the circumstances of those around me change significantly for the better. Those who worked the program day-in and day-out seemed to make the most progress. They were willing to go to a Higher Power and ask for help, calmly and without any reservations. By working with a sponsor and doing the Steps, I began to see that the tools of A.A. not only kept me sober but brought me a new sense of belonging, a sense of being part of, that had eluded me for so long. My family life has improved, I have switched jobs because of a better opportunity not because I was running away, and I've become willing to be less selfish and more useful to others. On a daily basis, I am relieved of the bondage of self and better able to do the will of my Higher Power.

These days, I am very grateful and lucky to be part of A.A., to be sober and to be willing to be of service to others. The term reservation now means an arrangement to have something (such as a table at a restaurant) held for one's use. I plan to make such a reservation very soon for a family dinner celebrating my daughter's graduation from college. I am grateful to be part of this celebration.

—Bob H.

My Early Sobriety

My name is Wayne and I'm an alcoholic. I grew up in a dysfunctional family supported by the welfare system. I started drinking at twelve or thirteen years of age; my first and last drunks were blackouts with many more in between. I realize now that I was an alcoholic with that very first drink. At an early age, I was in trouble with the school system and the police and was assigned a probation officer. At seventeen, I married a girl my age whom I met under the influence of alcohol - not the most promising way to start a marriage. We lived in our own dysfunction, with significant consequences for our three beautiful sons. Mentally, emotionally and spiritually, I had stopped growing.

My last drunk was August 9, 1975. When I awoke at three AM on August 10, 1975 and before my feet touched the floor, I knew that I was the problem; I could no longer blame other people. When I called Norwich State Hospital, they wanted to admit me immediately. When I refused, they gave me a psychiatrist's phone number urging me to make an appointment. At my session, he told me I was an alcoholic. When I told him I was too young to be an alcoholic, he asked me for

five minutes of my time and proceeded to explain the nature of this disease. He told me I had to make a 180-degree turn in my life and sent me to A.A. Initially, I had no understanding of what he meant but I do today. Even though I was not happy about going to A.A. back then, today I am thankful and fortunate that I followed his advice.

In my early sobriety, I went to couple of meetings a week and sat by myself, holding on tightly in white knuckle sobriety. After six months, I almost started drinking again. I thank God that I did not drink because there was a strong possibility that I would not have made it back. I am thankful for the men and women back then who said to keep the program simple. They told me the first time in recovery is a gift but that you have to work for it the second time. I believed them knowing that drinking would only make things worse. My sponsor and other members of A.A. explained the importance of getting involved with the Twelve Steps. When I told them I didn't like the Steps, they said the Steps were not here to be liked but to be understood and applied in my life.

As I started to get more involved with the program, my life started changing for the better. I began to work the Steps and came to believe in the God of my understanding. I took service commitments including setting-up for meetings, and being a coffee maker, greeter and GSR. These days I continue to have excellent people show me how to maintain my sobriety and be the best person I can be on a daily basis.

As stated in the forward to "Twenty-Four Hours A Day", I know that if I don't take that first drink today, I'll probably never take it because it's always about today. The reading from August 9th (my last drunk) tells me I have an allergy to alcohol while the reading from August 12th (my first meeting) tells me there was nothing left for me but to pick up the simple kit of spiritual tools laid at my feet by Alcoholics Anonymous.

—Wayne W., Niantic, CT

The Importance of Step 12

Step 12 is the answer to permanent recovery, it is the melding of the three legacies of A.A. (recovery, unity, service). Without Step 12 the first 11 steps become nothing more than a selfish, self-seeking course of action. Step 12 ensures that the one selfish aspect of recovery, the Steps, which save me from the mental obsession remains paradoxically selfless.

Step 12 promises us a spiritual awakening as a result of the first 11 steps. The first 11 steps if worked honestly and thoroughly point out to the alcoholic that the root of their problem was a spiritual malady caused by self-centeredness. Therefore, the overall answer to the problem is AA's legacy of service and service is the treatment for this spiritual malady. The third legacy asks us to be unselfish and self-sacrificing. Step 12 tells us to practice these principles in all our affairs. It's not thinking less of ourselves, it is thinking of ourselves less.

Step 12 calls us to be selfless in all our affairs both inside and outside of A.A. Service to the world outside of A.A. is most excellent and necessary, but we cannot forget the genius middle part of the step; "we tried to carry this message to the alcoholic." It is this part of step 12 that connects us back to AA's legacy of unity, which deals with the physical aspect.

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

In the early days of recovery when fear, self-knowledge and willpower cannot keep us from a drink it is our fellows that create that barrier strong enough for us to recover. It is truly in this part of Step 12 where spiritual growth is accelerated and recovery is solidified. Working with other alcoholics, is unity, service, and recovery. When we work with other alcoholics we are reminded of our own character defects which we need to continue to work on. We are pushed to work Steps 10 and 11 on a daily basis in order to grow in effectiveness and not be hypocritical. We can turn our sordid misdeeds into assets through which we can help the newcomer recover. It is in this way that Step 12 in its entirety is paramount to recovery, paradoxically helping myself by helping other alcoholics.

*In love and service,
–Anonymous, District 9*

REFLECTION

Born with lighted fuses
In each fist
I sought life's ruses
With a twist

Looked for thrills 'out there`
Freedom and I-don't-care
Ended up in sad despair
With silver in my hair

Cried out for help, a sign
Heard, "it is the wine,
Surrender fermented drink
And life will cease to stink"

`twas His call
This is why,
Sober and all,
I'm mostly high

–Philip T., New Britain

Blessings of Recovery

A line from a Paul Simon song, "Think Too Much", says "Maybe I think too much for my own good." Epictetus said, "it's our ideas about things, and not the things themselves which cause our distress." It's so easy for me to fall into the familiar mode of mental gyration, pontification, projection and self-flagellation. "Yeah, but", "On the other hand", "If only", "I should", "I need." The blessings of recovery are limitless and here I stand surrounded by them; yet my natural proclivities for self-doubt and needless worry have the capacity to obscure my ability to experience and fully appreciate those blessings with a grateful heart. Thank goodness the universe has its own way of reminding me of my priorities.

I grew up with a bad set of information. Love wasn't real, family wasn't about love, and success had nothing to do with

freedom or joy. Happiness was most decidedly an outside job and validation came from the acceptance and approval of others. Shame and secrecy were the watch words. My software update began in January of 1987, though I knew nothing of it at the time. I fell in love with the most amazing person that I had ever met until then, and she remains so some thirty years hence. It was by no means an easy substitution. Scrubbing that hard drive clean is a process that continues on a daily basis to this day. My capacity to wallow in discomfort because of its familiarity is astonishing. This wonderful woman, after months of begging on my part and probably against her better judgement agreed to marry me and later blessed me with two of the sweetest, kindest, most intelligent children in the history of children. I repaid these amazing gifts by bringing pain, uncertainty and chaos into our lives and the lives of all who knew or cared about us. Still she persisted.

Last week was her 60th birthday and I was fortunate to be able to attend a luncheon given by her family in her honor. As I sat with my badass 94-year old father-in-law, my wife's sisters and brother, and my own little nuclear bunch I came to realize how grateful I am to be a real part of a real family where love and compassion rule the day and where kindness and the genuine desire for universal peace and happiness abound. It is incredible that I, the great I am, could both express and accept love with no strings attached, no trappings or substitutions, no fees paid or secret passwords necessary.

The blessings of recovery are limitless. They have given me a pathway to real freedom, to the love of my fellows and to the truth underlying all of existence. My role in all of this is to remain open and grateful, to slow down in order to appreciate the beauty of simplicity, to embrace those things which bring real joy, and to live and rejoice in the freedom with which recovery has blessed me.

–Ryan S., East Hampton

Serenity Prayer

God, grant us the serenity
to accept the things
we cannot change,
courage to change
the things we can,
and wisdom to know the difference.

**How to reach AA:
866-STEPS12**

Service Opportunity: Answering Service Volunteer

We Need Your Help!

The Answering Service is an initial point of contact for people who may be struggling with alcohol or those wanting information about Alcoholics Anonymous. The service we provide is the same as giving your phone number to a newcomer, except that you may never have met the person who is reaching out for help. All that you must do is share your experience, strength, and hope with another.

How it works:

A person who is looking for help calls one of ten district call centers or the Area-wide toll free number. The call taker will take the caller's information (sex, location, phone number, and why they are calling). If it is a Twelfth Step call, the center will go through the list of A.A. volunteers and see who is available to return the call. The call center does their best to match men with men and women with women from the same town. Your phone number is NEVER given out to anyone. It is up to you to return the call. Some people call because they are looking for a ride to a meeting. You are under no obligation to bring someone to a meeting. If you feel comfortable doing so, you may. It is suggested that you always bring someone with you. This helps ensure the safety of everyone involved.

How to sign up as a volunteer:

It is very simple. Please print and fill out the sheet on the website. We ask that you please put your first name and last initial. This helps us to keep our records straight. Please indicate the days and times you are available to return calls. We understand that not everyone is available all day, every day. Thanks to this program, we have careers and families that need us, as well. Once you've completed the form and provided the necessary information, you may give it to your group's General Service Representative (GSR) to hand to the District Answering Service Chair. You may also email a form with your contact information to answering-service@ct-aa.org. www.ct-aa.org/answering-service-web-sign-up-cover-page/

Heard in the Rooms...

*"We don't see the world as it is;
we see the world as we are."*

*"Humility is not thinking less of yourself;
it's thinking of yourself less."*

"Your goal in A.A. is to become humble, not famous."

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866-STEPS12**

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Save The Date

Spring Conference Assembly

June 24, 2018 — 9:00 am - 3:00 pm
VFW Hall, 41 Veterans Drive, New Britain

Rompiendo Fronteras / Breaking Frontiers 2018

La Espiritualidad Sin Fronteras / Spirituality with No Barriers
Domingo 29 de julio de 2018 / Sunday, July 29, 2018
9:00 am - 3:00 pm
Hamden Plains United Methodist Church
15 Church Street, Hamden
Details & Registration: www.ct-aa.org/rompiendo-fronteras/

Area 11 A.A. Round Up

August 25, 2018 — 8:00 am - 3:00 pm
First Baptist Church of Southington,
581 Meriden Avenue, Southington
Details & Registration:
www.ct-aa.org/new-and-events/area-11-round-up/

60th Annual Area 11 A.A. Convention

September 28 - 30, 2018
Red Lion Hotel, formerly The Radisson Hotel
100 Berlin Road, Cromwell
Details & Registration:
www.ct-aa.org/new-and-events/area-11-convention//

Visit www.ct-aa.org/new-and-events for more info.

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, P.O. Box 7060, 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 los siguiente:

Por el correos electrónicos: alki-line@ct-aa.org

Por el correos: Alki-Line, P.O. Box 7060, 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 A.A. program of recovery. Material may be edited for clarity and length. This newsletter and earlier issues can be downloaded at www.ct-aa.org.

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