



ALKI-LINE



TAKE ONE, IT'S FREE

The Area 11 A.A. Newsletter Vol. 28 No. 3 June 2019 – July 2019

Life Can Be Puzzling

Inspired while working on a jigsaw puzzle early one recovery retreat morning in 2018 at Cooper Hill Inn, East Dover, VT.

I think life is like a jigsaw puzzle. Both require patience, perseverance and time. Both are easier if we share our space and let others help us, and we help them. Together we find the piece/peace we are looking for.

If we sort the puzzle pieces before we begin, it takes less effort to find the piece we need. Sorting the pieces of the puzzle takes time and decisions are made as to how to sort them. These decisions are made based on the information we have at the time, such as how much of the puzzle we have left to do. For example, we may find that as time goes by, we prefer to sort by shape instead of color. In life we sort things out too. We grow when we continuously inventory ourselves and the decisions we've made. We allow ourselves to change direction as we go with the flow of life.

I like to work on putting the edge of the jigsaw puzzle together first. Creating the framework for the puzzle gives me a foundation, another starting point. Perhaps working the steps of Alcoholics Anonymous is our edge in life! Once we have our edge, we can begin to fill the empty space.

As in life, we can spend much time looking for a certain piece/peace. We think we have found it! But then it doesn't quite fit after all. Sometimes, we don't find out it doesn't fit until much later, such as when working on yet another piece/peace.

When trying to determine if the piece fits, it could help if we turn it over. Life events can be like that. Turn it over! If we force a piece into the puzzle, it usually won't be the right piece anyway and causes us trouble down the road.

There may be times when there were too many of us working on the same puzzle at the same time. It can be hard to see all the pieces. We need to have adequate space and work together on our puzzles without crowding each other. It's important and easier if we are able to see all the pieces. Too many helpers may delay our own work on a jigsaw puzzle and in life.

Sometimes, when we work on a puzzle or a problem, we have to step away from it for a while in order to return with a renewed outlook. Other times, we need only move around the table for a new perspective. Life may require this too – an open mind may be all that is required.

Perhaps there are outside forces at work affecting our ability to find the piece/peace we think we need. Maybe we unknowingly knocked a piece to the floor! Or worse – the piece is missing and not to be found! We trust that God knows what we need better than we do.

It's true some puzzles are harder than others and some days are harder than others. We usually have a picture of the jigsaw puzzle we are creating. Not so in life! Yet in both working on our jigsaw puzzle and living life, we learn to trust and find and know there is a Peace. How do we do it? We turn it over and over and over or go around and around as needed. We persevere until we find the piece/peace that fits.

—Chris O.

La Vida Puede Ser Un Acertijo

Inspirado mientras trabajaba haciendo un rompecabezas temprano en una mañana de recuperación en un retiro en el 2018 en Cooper Hill Inn, East Dover, VT.

Yo pienso que la vida es como un rompecabezas. Ambos requieren paciencia, perseverancia y tiempo. Ambos son más fáciles si compartimos nuestro espacio y dejamos que otros nos ayuden, y nosotros les ayudamos a ellos. Juntos encontramos la pieza/paz que estamos buscando.

Si ordenamos las piezas del rompecabezas antes de comenzar, lleva menos esfuerzo encontrar la pieza que necesitamos. Ordenar las piezas del rompecabezas lleva tiempo y se toman decisiones en cuanto a cómo ordenarlas. Estas decisiones se toman basadas en la información que tengamos en el momento, tal como cuánto del rompecabezas nos falta por terminar. Por ejemplo, tal vez encontremos conforme pasa el tiempo, preferimos ordenar de acuerdo a la forma en vez del color. En la vida nosotros ordenamos las cosas también. Crecemos cuando continuamente hacemos un in-



ventario de nosotros mismos y de las decisiones que tomamos. Nos permitimos a nosotros mismos cambiar de dirección según vamos fluyendo en la vida.

A mí me gusta trabajar en juntar las piezas de las orillas del rompecabezas primero. Crear el marco del rompecabezas me da una base, otro punto de inicio. ¡Quizás trabajar los pasos de Alcohólicos Anónimos es nuestra orilla en la vida! Una vez tengamos nuestra orilla, podemos empezar a rellenar el espacio vacío.

Igual en la vida, podemos pasar mucho tiempo en busca de cierta pieza/paz. ¡Creemos que la hemos encontrado! Pero luego después de todo no encaja muy bien. Y a veces no nos damos cuenta de que no encaja sino hasta mucho después, así como cuando estamos trabajando en otra pieza/paz.

Cuando estamos tratando de determinar si la pieza encaja, podría ayudar si le damos vuelta. Los eventos de la vida pueden ser así. ¡Denle vuelta! Si forzamos una pieza a ese rompecabezas, usualmente no va a ser la pieza correcta de todos modos y puede causarnos problemas más adelante.

Puede haber veces en que demasiados de nosotros hayamos estado trabajando en el mismo rompecabezas a la misma vez. Puede ser difícil ver todas las piezas. Necesitamos tener el espacio adecuado y trabajar juntos en nuestros rompecabezas sin amontonarnos unos con otros. Es importante y más fácil si podemos ver todas las piezas. Demasiados ayudantes podrían atrasar nuestro propio trabajo, en un rompecabezas y en la vida.

A veces, cuando trabajamos en un rompecabezas o en un problema, tenemos que alejarnos de él un tiempo para poder regresar con un punto de vista renovado. Otras veces, solo necesitamos movernos alrededor de la mesa para obtener una nueva perspectiva. La vida tal vez requiera esto también – una mente abierta puede ser lo único que se requiere.

Quizás hay fuerzas externas trabajando en afectar nuestra habilidad para encontrar la pieza/paz que nosotros pensamos que necesitamos. ¡Quizás sin saberlo botamos una pieza al suelo! ¡O aún peor – la pieza está perdida y sin poderla encontrar! Confiamos en que Dios sabe lo que nosotros necesitamos mejor que nosotros mismos.

Es cierto que algunos rompecabezas son más difíciles que otros y que algunos días son más difíciles que otros. Usualmente tenemos una imagen del rompecabezas que estamos formando. ¡No es así en la vida! Sin embargo, trabajando en ambos nuestro rompecabezas y en vivir la vida, aprendemos a confiar y encontrar y saber que existe una Paz. ¿Cómo lo hacemos? Le damos vuelta, y vuelta y vuelta o vamos alrededor y alrededor según sea necesario. Lo preservamos hasta que encontremos la pieza/paz que encaje bien.

–Chris O.

One Day When I Woke Up

Three years ago, I walked back into the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous after being completely licked. Alcohol had taken everything from me at 22 years old. I then became open minded to working the Steps with a sponsor. I used to wake up with crippling anxiety about spending the rest of my life sober at such a young age. I then let Steps Four and Five work in my life, then Six and Seven, then Eight and Nine. I suddenly began to feel better. I can't pinpoint the exact day but one day I woke up different.

One day when I woke up... spending the rest of my life sober didn't seem like a bad idea. My first thought wasn't me. I got down on my knees and turned my will over to the god of my understanding. I truly believed everything was going to be OK no matter what.

As long as I continue on this path, I will grow and have greater understanding. Recovery has always done for me what I can't do for myself. Getting sober at 22 years old was the greatest decision I ever made. There is nothing more important to me in my life than my recovery. Without it I have nothing. May the winds of recovery fill our sails and carry us to places we never imagined possible on this amazing, higher power-driven journey.

– T.J., Lebanon

Recovery

When it happens to you,
You'll know what I mean.

Until then, nothing makes sense.
The first thing you'll know
Is the last thing to go and
From then on, it's all present tense.

The room will be bright—
You'll forget why you came

But you'll know that it's where you belong
The room will be silent –
You won't hear the music
But you'll know every word to the song

.
Through the sound of the silence
You'll let go of the violence

That has pushed you so far from the peace.
The sky will give way
And through shades of gray,
You'll see the moon rise in the east

–Maureen G., New Haven



True North

I laughed when the sponsor I “stalked” uttered the epic phrase, “The booze is just a symptom of the underlying problem.” What a ridiculous notion! I was a great guy who just had no sense of moderation when it came to alcohol and other drugs. Truth be told, I had nothing like the emotional or spiritual chops to sit at the grown-up table. My capacity to give or receive love (or even a simple compliment) was woefully underdeveloped. As far as accepting the world as it was instead of the way I would have it; absolute zero. In my second year of sobriety, I was blessed enough to hear a wise, older gentleman make the following statement, “Acceptance of the Third Step makes a life of self-indulgence impossible.” Until I could address, be mindful of and manage my irrational fears, and put to rest the countless ideas I had about myself, it was going to be a long and difficult walk out of the woods for yours truly.

That’s where the concept of “Spiritual awakening” comes in. Step Twelve says, “Having had a Spiritual awakening as the result of these steps...” - not “A” result, not “among the many results”, but “THE” result. In other words, the one and only objective of the Twelve Step process is the achievement of what the psychiatric community calls “psychic displacement,” that is taking ME off the center of the universe. Then, options beyond my own wants, needs and desires (how about thinking of someone else for a change?) become possible.

Growth became possible once I was able to trust in a power greater than myself, to possess faith to which I can turn in times of need and to align my words and actions with what my sponsor likes to call “true North”.

Acceptance of the Third Step has given me the freedom to do what I know to be right on a daily basis and for this I am eternally grateful.

—John S., East Haddam

We’ll See

When insanity has its way
On any given day
And reactions are in play
Best watch what I say

—Anonymous

Falling Off the Floor

I remember falling. Not a real fall-down-hurt-yourself kind of fall. It was more of a crumpling of the whole body. I remember having my cell phone in my hand for a reason I can’t recall. As I lay there, I felt the carpet on my cheek, little bristles poking at my skin. It smelled stale and musty. I heard footsteps coming into the room. Then . . . nothing.

Noises were soft and muted - muffled conversations. I opened my eyes and perceived people hovering over me. Through an alcohol-induced fog, I recognized my daughter, my sister and my girlfriend. I was in the ER. “How much did you drink?” someone in a white coat asked me. Huh? It seemed not to be the first time that question was asked of me. “I dunno,” I think I replied. Soon afterward, I faded from the scene. I was there, but not there. I felt no pain. The white coat spoke again. “Can I tell your family your alcohol level?” “No,” I remember saying. Oblivion, my friend, visited me.

As my eyelids slid open, the lighting around me was subdued. The walls were an off-white or some light color. I thought, “It’s a hospital.” I was in a bed and saw IV bags with tubing attached to needles stuck in my arm. “Uh, oh, not good.” With anxiousness in their eyes, I saw my daughter and girlfriend looking in my direction. “Do you remember what happened?” someone asked.

Yeah, I remember. I was drinking in bed. I would sometimes do that so when I blacked out, I was someplace comfortable. My life had become: drink to forget, drink to reminisce, drink to celebrate, and drink to make work tolerable. I had no excuse but I made lots of them. I was lonely. I felt abandoned. I had nothing to do that afternoon. The day was too long. Celebrate that I went to a meeting or celebrate when I didn’t go to a meeting. And it went on and on.

Yep, you got it. After that charming episode, my daughter set me up with an intensive outpatient program (IOP). The program was great. For three days a week, three hours a night, I was getting it! (Yeah, right). I was too embarrassed to even think about “that AA stuff”. I can do it myself! (Yeah, right). And you know what? I didn’t drink for several months after the IOP program until one day I said, “Okay AI, you deserve a drink!” (Yeah, right).

Wouldn’t it be wonderful if simply attending AA meetings made you stop drinking? Oh, I have to do some of the work? Do I have a part in this? The floor and I had a few more encounters, even after I joined “those people” in AA. I knew I had a problem and I kept going to AA meetings. Eventually, I realized my “desire” for a drink was my problem to solve. But, I did not have to solve it alone. The rooms of AA helped me find the word “no” in my vocabulary. “Those people” turned out to be a bunch of great people. All of us together are finding our separate paths to sobriety.

After almost sixty years of on-and-off drinking, I have found that the rooms of AA are the place to be. Need to be there? You bet but I deserve to be there too. My family deserves it. You, my fellow “those people” in AA, deserve another person in the cheering section. I will turn 82 this year and I’ve never had it so good!

—Al Di.



Humility vs EGO

Humility is a mental strain
Without reflex activation
Ego bypasses my brain
Seeking personal levitation

Balance is my sometimes goal
Expecting to somehow gain control
With humility and ego declaring truce
Sponsored by Mother Goose
—Anonymous.

Balance

Emotional moments zip by
My mind wanders
In pointless babble
Ignoring the Now
A place to pause
Linger a while
Know inner quiet
—Anonymous

Win A Free Admission to the Area 11 Convention



The writer of one accepted submission for the August/September issue of the **Alki-Line**, your Area 11 newsletter, chosen at random, will receive **FREE ADMISSION** to the **Area 11 Convention** to be held on September 27 - 29, 2019 at the Red Lion Inn in Cromwell.

Share your story, essay, article, or poetry with others in recovery through the **Alki-Line**. We are accepting submissions of one page or less and make sure you identify it as being an entry for the contest.

Don't miss this chance not only to contribute your experience, strength and hope but also to attend this marvelous event!

Submit by **JULY 1, 2019** using:

Email: alki-line@ct-aa.org

Mail: Alki-Line, P.O. Box 7060, Meriden, CT 06450

SAVE THE DATE

Founder's Day Celebration

June 15, 2019 — 11:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Christ & Holy Trinity Church, 75 Church Lane,
Westport, CT 06880

Contact: primarypurpose06880@gmail.com

Rompiendo Fronteras / Breaking Frontiers 2019

July 21, 2019 — 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Hamden Plains United Methodist Church, 15 Church Street,
Hamden, CT 06514

Contact: ct-aa.org/event/2019-rompiendo-fronteras-breaking-frontiers

61st Area 11 Convention

September 27 - 29, 2019

Red Lion Inn, 100 Berlin Road

Cromwell, CT 06880

Contact: area11convention@ct-aa.org

Contact hotel for rooms at a discount: 860-635-2000

International Conference of Young People in Alcoholics

Anonymous (ICYPAA) Convention

August -22 – 25, 2019

Boston Marriott Copley Place, 110 Huntington Avenue,
Boston, MA 02116

Contact: icypaa.org

Connecticut State Conference of Young People In Alcoholics

Anonymous (CSCYPAA) Convention

November 29 – December 1, 2019

Red Lion Inn, 100 Berlin Road

Cromwell, CT 06880

Contact: ct-aa.org/cscypaa

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 AA 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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