



ALKI-LINE



TAKE ONE, IT'S FREE

The Area 11 A.A. Newsletter Vol. 28 No. 4 August 2019 – September 2019



Winner of the Alki-Line Essay Contest



A Long, Slow Recovery

“Hope you have a wonderful year and a long slow recovery, one day at a time.”

That’s what my sister’s sponsor inscribed in what would ultimately become my dog-eared copy of *Twenty-Four Hours a Day*. So many of the time honored catch phrases of AA flat out defied logic from my perspective as a newcomer. In my case, it really couldn’t have been any other way. My desire for freedom combined with my need to learn a method of living, which would curtail my tendency to create chaos, led me to accept the loving embrace of the recovery community. This occurred in spite of the red flags and sirens that my disease created to deter me. Engagement in the recovery process led me first to fellowship, then hope, willingness and faith and ultimately courage and empathy toward others. Suddenly (though there was nothing sudden about it), I had the ability to see the world and my place in it without the distortions of fear and resentment. Life became less complicated and brief moments of clarity provided a strong sense of purpose. There have been times when the effort seemed too great, the rewards too small, my contributions futile. However, the power of the fellowship, the program of action and the gifts of patience and perspective that recovery have given me have kept me sober and mostly sane. At the end of what I hope was my last relapse (I would say bender but it lasted nineteen years), I had been bouncing in and out of the rooms and could have recited half of the literature by heart - not *from* my heart, though. In my estimation, once my spiritual awakening took root as a direct result of having worked AA’s Twelve Steps, I was able to begin the shortest and yet longest journey of my life, the eighteen inches from my head to my heart. I’m glad it’s been a long, slow recovery thus far. Though it’s often clouded by frustration and impatience, I’ve learned that those feelings represent the conflict that always precedes change for me. Our

fellowship and way of living have convinced me to embrace and look forward to change as an opportunity to grow and to be of service.

Have a long, slow recovery one day at a time!

– Peter P., Windham



*Peter P., winner of the Alki-Line Essay Contest, will receive **FREE ADMISSION** to the **Area 11 Convention** to be held on September 27 - 29, 2019 at the Red Lion Inn in Cromwell. Congratulations!*

Things and Stuff

The things that freak me out the most,
They aren’t even real
They represent an ancient ghost
Whose will is hard as steel

They walk the hallways of my mind
In night’s lost lonely deep
Intruding on what peace I find
In fitful, furtive sleep

The things that freak me out the most
Reside inside my head
They often have me so engrossed
I’m hanging by a thread

But I know God and He knows me
And if my faith is true
I can return to sanity
And home to loving you.

–John S.



A Life Saved

As I am sitting in a dark room, meditating with 40 other people over our deep, dark secrets, one comes to mind. It seemingly comes out of nowhere. “I’m an alcoholic,” a voice that sounds very similar to mine says within. “I’m an alcoholic,” a voice that is definitely mine says aloud.

Where the hell did that come from? Since when am I an alcoholic? At the most, I just haven’t figured out how to drink safely, I try to convince myself.

A few days later, I find myself in a church basement. If I wasn’t sure I didn’t belong before, I am pretty certain I don’t belong now. No one looks like me. The stories sound slightly familiar, but I haven’t lost everything yet, so I am still okay to drink, right?

“Keep coming,” a friendly voice beside me says aloud. “Keep coming,” a voice that sounds very similar to mine says within.

So, I keep coming. Day after day, I find more and more similarities between me and these people that I initially wanted nothing to do with. I stop drinking and start laughing with these near strangers. I didn’t think it was possible to laugh and have fun without drinking.

It takes a few attempts and a few “no’s,” but I get a sponsor and we start to work the Steps right away. Slowly, but surely, I start to feel better. I start to understand how true happiness feels. I start to connect with others on a deeper level. And, more importantly, I start to connect with myself.

Life is good! I am on what many call a “pink cloud.” I think, what could possibly bring me down from this cloud?

Connecting with myself as a result of working the Steps meant that I had a clearer head and a clearer understanding of my body. So, when a lump showed up in my right breast, I immediately knew something was not right. When two different doctors dismissed this lump as nothing, I had the ability, courage, and care enough to ask for more testing.

I was less than 5 months sober when I was diagnosed with breast cancer.

Out of all of the things I could have done when I was diagnosed, the program taught me that drinking would be the least helpful. So, instead, I called my sponsor. She invited me to a meeting where she introduced me to someone else with breast cancer. And, we continued on working the Steps the very next day.

I am now almost 2 years sober and a few months out of active cancer treatment. Being a part of the program gave me an awesome and reliable network of men and women that cared for me during some of my lowest lows. It gave me

faith and allowed for continued spiritual growth during one of the most trying times in my life. But, most importantly, it saved my life.

I know now those voices that sounded similar to mine, but seemingly came out of nowhere, to be the voice of God. You may call this Higher Power, Great Spirit, the Universe... I just choose God. God directed me to the rooms of AA. And, the rooms and Steps of AA saved my life. For that, I will be eternally grateful.

—Maysha Z.

Una Vida Salvada

Mientras estoy sentada en un cuarto oscuro, meditando con otras 40 personas sobre nuestros secretos profundos y oscuros, uno se me viene a la mente. Pareciera salir de la nada. “Yo soy una alcohólica,” dice una voz desde adentro que suena muy similar a la mía. “Yo soy una alcohólica,” dice una voz, en voz alta que definitivamente sí es la mía.

¿De dónde demonios salió eso? ¿Desde cuándo soy alcohólica? Si mucho, simplemente no he podido descifrar cómo beber de forma segura, es lo que me trato de convencer a mí misma.

Unos cuantos días después, me encuentro en el sótano de una iglesia. Si antes no estaba segura de pertenecer, ahora estoy casi segura de no pertenecer. Nadie me voltea a ver. Las historias me suenan algo familiares, pero aún no lo he perdido todo, entonces todavía está bien que beba, ¿cierto?

“Sigue viniendo,” dice una voz amable a mi lado en voz alta. “Sigue viniendo,” dice una voz desde adentro que suena muy similar a la mía.

Entonces, yo sigo viniendo. Día tras día, encuentro más similitudes entre estas personas y yo con las que inicialmente no quería tener nada que ver. Dejo de beber y empiezo a reírme con estos extraños a mi lado. No pensaba que fuera posible reírme y divertirme sin beber.

Lleva unos cuantos intentos y unos cuantos “no,” pero encuentro a una madrina y empezamos a trabajar los Pasos de inmediato. Lentamente, pero seguro, empiezo a sentirme mejor. Empiezo a comprender cómo se siente la verdadera felicidad. Empiezo a conectarme con otros en un nivel más profundo. Y aún más importante, empiezo a conectarme conmigo misma.

¡La vida es buena! Estoy en lo que muchos le llaman la “nube rosa.” Yo pienso, ¿qué me podría bajar de esta nube?

Conectarme conmigo misma como resultado de trabajar los Pasos significaba que yo tenía una mente más clara y un entendimiento más claro acerca de mi cuerpo. Así es que



cuando un nudo apareció en mi pecho derecho, inmediatamente supe que algo no andaba bien. Cuando dos doctores distintos descartaron ese nudo como que no era nada, tuve suficiente habilidad, valor y cuidado para pedir más pruebas.

Tenía menos de 5 meses de sobriedad cuando fui diagnosticada con cáncer del seno.

De todas las cosas que pude haber hecho cuando fui diagnosticada, el programa me enseñó que beber sería lo menos útil. Así es que, en vez de eso, llamé a mi madrina. Ella me invitó a una reunión en donde ella me presentó a alguien más que tenía cáncer del seno. Y continuamos trabajando en los Pasos el siguiente día.

Ahora casi tengo 2 años de sobriedad y llevo unos cuantos meses de haber salido del tratamiento activo por el cáncer. Formar parte del programa me dio una fantástica red de hombres y mujeres confiables que se preocupaban por mí durante unos de mis momentos más bajos. Me dio fe y permitió que siguiera mi crecimiento espiritual durante una de las situaciones más difíciles en mi vida. Pero, aún más importante, me salvó la vida.

Yo sé ahora que esas voces que sonaban similar a la mía, pero que aparentemente salía de la nada, era la voz de Dios. Le podrán llamar el Poder Superior, el Gran Espíritu, el Universo... yo sólo elijo Dios. Dios me dirigió a los cuartos de AA. Y, los cuartos y los Pasos de AA me salvaron la vida. Por eso, yo estaré eternamente agradecida.

– *Maysha Z.*

The Art of Growth

The Big Book speaks of the root of our problem as being "self-will run riot." Many of us thought we could run the show, aka our own lives, without any help from anyone. It brought us to our knees and to A.A.'s doorstep in a "hopeless state of mind, body and spirit." Bill further expands on this theme of the actor wanting to play not just his part but everyone else's too. It just doesn't work. We butt heads, create divisions and cause harm not just to ourselves but to others as well. The really sick part is the alcoholic is totally clueless to the mayhem and carnage around him. We are experts at rationalizing away our own atrocious behavior. We don't take responsibility for our actions or make amends. We thought life this way for us was "normal." It made us miserable and unhappy and brought us back to the bottle for some false ease and comfort.

I remember well the first time crossing the threshold into the world of AA, which I now call my home and family. Those last two paragraphs on page 164 hit me like a ton of bricks and I cried like a baby because the solution to my

problem was right in front of me. No one forced me to do anything or pontificated or dictated to me. It was and still is my choice one day at a time to take this well-worn path of recovery that truly works. Here it is, take it or leave. To be honest there are days when the latter crosses my mind, especially when a family member pushes my emotional buttons, primarily anger. By the grace of God and this fellowship I've managed to avoid going back into the pit. I've found it helpful to Change the words in the Serenity Prayer from "things" to "people" because it's people and not things that get my dander up.

I've found doing service work with the district corrections and treatment committees very rewarding and I've met some incredibly kind-hearted, generous people with whom it is an honor and privilege to serve. I've been reading the new book, *Our Great Responsibility*, a selection of Bill's talks to the General Service Conferences. This has given me great comfort and hope for the sustainability of our society. Whatever petty squabbles or differences we may encounter in service work today, they pale in comparison to what Bill and those early AAs endured for future AAs just like me.

As the old saying goes, no good deed goes unpunished. I'll leave you with this from Bill's new book on page 128, "The art of growth has a good deal to do with making constructive use of trouble."

– *Aloha Beth*

Lost – A Brilliant Mind

"My Mind Wandered, and Never Came Back," proclaims a bumper sticker my sister gave me. My son, Donald, wandered and never came back. His body was discovered in Bangkok, Thailand.

It began with Don's alcohol-fueled three and one-half hour phone call to me. Many years earlier, Don said he blamed me for his drinking problem. And why not? It's a convenient excuse. He never saw a father that wasn't drinking at one time or another. He continued with inebriated phone calls to other family members. He was reaching out but we did not realize to what extent. I was painfully aware that some years earlier he had asked his siblings and mother, whom I had divorced 30 years ago, not to talk to me about him or his whereabouts. Now finally he is talking to me but can we rebuild a relationship? Wow, hold that thought!

I told the family that he was in harm's way. None of us lived nearby. His sister volunteered to be the "baddy" and called 911. He was taken to the local hospital in Florida and placed under psychiatric watch. I didn't know until that day, that three years earlier, his brother had rescued him from a hospital in Belize after a suicide attempt. I was angry that the family kept this from me for three years but decided to fly



to Orlando to be with Don for everyone's sake. I was anxious to finally be with my son, one alcoholic to another!

When I arrived at the hospital the next day, I barely recognized him. A bag of intravenous saline solution with potassium was dangling from a pole. He was barely aware of my presence. Dutifully, I reported back to the family on his daily progress. It was three days before he could hold down a grilled cheese sandwich. He had drunk himself nearly to destruction.

On the third day, he was remanded to the psychiatric ward. On the fourth day, we had a great conversation, father to son, alcoholic to alcoholic. His questions were mostly about my recovery, my attempted suicide, and my AA program. My son was self-taught and had become quite proficient at programming. His mind and intellect were far above mine. We spoke of my Higher Power. He could not or chose not to look beyond his intellect to solve his alcoholism. There was an eagerness in his voice which spoke of a desire for recovery but he was lost in the morass of a keen and questioning mind.

I was so hopeful. We were finally part of one another's lives. I had visions of a bright future for us. Twenty-four days later, he was dead, having fallen from a balcony in Bangkok, about as far away from family as one could get. The report from the mandatory autopsy completed by the Forensic Institute listed the cause of death as "subdural hematoma; laceration of the lung and heart; rib fracture." He leaves three children.

On page 181 of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, the story, "Doctor Bob's Nightmare" states, "If you think you are an atheist, an agnostic, a skeptic, or have any other form of intellectual pride which keeps you from accepting what is in this book, I feel sorry for you." Donald, my son, Dr. Bob was writing to you. I am sorry. Our words reached your ears but you would not listen. Now, at age 49, you are only in our hearts.

—Al Di.

Holiday Alkathons:

For publication in the October/November edition of the Alki-line, please submit Alkathon information by **September 15, 2019**



SAVE THE DATE

District 8 Sunday Morning Serenity Group Picnic

August 18, 2019 12:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Hubbard Park, Meriden near bandstand area

Food and beverages will be supplied but please bring a dish or dessert to share

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

Area 4 Fall Assembly

November 3, 2019 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Putin Community Center 30 Deerfield Road

Wethersfield, CT 06109

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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