



ALKI-LINE



TAKE ONE, IT'S FREE

The Area 11 A.A. Newsletter Vol. 29 No. 5 October 2020 – November 2020

Resentment: The Number One Offender

On June 6, 2003, I celebrated my 20-year anniversary at my home group by picking up my coin and expressing my gratitude. What I didn't express was a festering resentment that I had been keeping to myself, not even sharing it with my sponsor at dinner the night before.

That evening, I was confronted with that very same resentment and as I've painfully learned, a resentment unshared is a time bomb waiting for detonation. That confrontation was the trigger for the explosion and I abruptly left the house.

I got in my car with a single thought that kept running through my head: "I'll show you, I'm going to drink!" I'll drink the poison and you will feel the pain . . . the bizarre alcoholic logic in my brain was operating at full steam.

I drove to the nearest package store, went inside and started looking at the seemingly endless varieties of poison chilling behind the glass doors. As I stood there, thoughts of the past started spinning in my mind as if the bottles were speaking to me telepathically. My head was filling with white noise from nowhere, or perhaps from within, just as the shop owner approached me. When he asked if he could help me, I stammered that I was "just looking". Gripped by fear, I immediately turned and headed for the door. I walked out into the parking lot shaking and took a deep breath of relief. My Higher Power had restored me to sanity!

The next morning, I realized the significance of what I had done. I understood that my big mistake was in not sharing what was going on with anyone, including my sponsor. I returned to my home group, put up my hand and shared my story of the day before. The next person to share was my sponsor, who said something along the lines of "How selfish and self-centered could you be? How could you even think of doing that to the people that love you?"

His words hit home. I cannot treat my alcoholism lightly, nor can I take shortcuts. There are no sobriety guarantees no matter how long we have been in the program. I have to deal with my disease and maintain my spiritual condition every day. I need to practice ALL of the program: Work the

steps thoroughly, share my thoughts with my sponsor, others in the program and my Higher Power, pass along what I've learned to others and continually watch for the resentments and selfishness that threaten to destroy me. "This business of resentment...is fatal." "We...must be rid of this selfishness...or it kills us!" True words that I need to live by, every day!

—Don F., Bethany

El Resentimiento: el Ofensor Número Uno

El 6 de junio de 2003, celebré mi vigésimo aniversario en mi grupo base recibiendo mi moneda y expresando mi gratitud. Lo que no expresé fue un resentimiento que iba escondiéndose que había estado ocultando, ni siquiera compartiéndolo con mi padrino durante la cena la noche anterior.

Esa noche, fui confrontado acerca de ese mismo resentimiento y como he aprendido a través del dolor, un resentimiento no compartido es una bomba de tiempo esperando ser detonada. Esa confrontación fue lo que detonó la explosión y abruptamente salí del casa.

Me metí a mi auto con un solo pensamiento que seguía dándome vueltas en la cabeza: "¡Yo te mostraré, me voy a ir a beber!" Voy a beberme el veneno y tú vas a sentir el dolor...la lógica extraña y alcohólica en mi cerebro estaba operando a todo motor.

Conduje a la licorería más cercana, entré y empecé a ver lo que parecía ser una variedad interminable de veneno enfriándose detrás de las puertas de vidrio. Mientras estaba parado ahí, los pensamientos del pasado comenzaron a girar en mi mente como si las botellas me estuvieran hablando telepáticamente. Mi cabeza estaba llenándose con ruido blanco que llegaba de la nada, o quizá desde mi interior, justo cuando el dueño de la tienda se me acercó. Cuando él preguntó si me podía ayudar en algo, le tartamudeé que "sólo estaba mirando". Sujetado por el temor, inmediatamente me di la vuelta y me dirigí hacia la puerta. Salí al estacionamiento temblando y tomé un respiro profundo de



alivio. ¡Mi Poder Superior me había regresado hacia la sanidad!

La mañana siguiente, me di cuenta de lo que significaba lo que había hecho. Comprendí que mi gran error había sido no compartir con ninguno lo que me estaba sucediendo, incluyendo a mi padrino. Regresé a mi grupo base, levanté mi mano y compartí mi historia del día anterior. La siguiente persona en compartir fue mi padrino, quien dijo algo como “¿Qué tan egoísta y egocéntrico puedes ser? ¿Cómo se te puede si quiera ocurrir hacerle eso a las personas que te aman?”

Sus palabras me tocaron profundamente. No puedo tratar mi alcoholismo con menosprecio, ni puedo tomar atajos. No existen garantías de sobriedad, no importa cuánto tiempo hemos estado en el programa. Tengo que lidiar con mi enfermedad y mantener mi condición espiritual todos los días. Necesito practicar TODO el programa: Trabajar los pasos a fondo, compartir mis pensamientos con mi padrino, con otros en el programa y con mi Poder Superior, transmitir a otros lo que he aprendido y continuamente estar pendiente de los resentimientos y el egoísmo que amenazan con destruirme. “Este asunto de los resentimientos...es fatal.” “Nosotros...tenemos que librarnos de ese egoísmo... ¡o nos mata!” ¡Son palabras certeras por las que debo vivir todos los días!

—Don F., Bethany

Staying Sober Through Anything

It has been about five months since the pandemic began and disrupted all of our lives. I was deemed an essential employee - figure that out. We get sober and get responsible. So, going to work every day has been a blessing in getting through this trying time. Still having a job is also a blessing. I just couldn't imagine staying home all that time. The hardest part is that the actual face-to-face A.A. meetings had to be suspended. Thank God we live in this time in history. With the technology that is out there today, meetings were able to start again pretty quickly through applications such as Zoom and others. I got sober in 1998 and if this happened back then, I don't know what we would have done.

Of course, I was skeptical at the beginning. How was this going to work? I started attending a couple of online meetings a week. As alcoholics, we don't always like change. At the beginning I didn't appreciate the virtual meetings. I like to see people in person; it is hard to see how a person is really doing on a two-inch-wide cell phone screen. Over time, I was able to appreciate the meetings more. I now consider them a blessing. I need to hear the recovery mes-

sage through other people, not just sit at home and read the literature.

I would personally like to thank the schedules committee for getting these online meetings listed on the area website. It is so easy to drop in on a meeting anywhere in the state or around the world. This wouldn't have been possible without the online meetings. I was able to catch a few of the meetings in Akron in June for Founder's Day and for some of the Alcoholics Anonymous International Convention in July. Even though Soberfest didn't meet in person this year, I was able to listen to a couple of the speakers. I have also attended a couple of online GSR meetings. I hope that the newcomer can still find us. One of my most favorite things about in-person meetings is anniversary night. I truly miss a newcomer getting a 24-hour coin and hearing everyone say, “Keep coming.”

I am guessing that this pandemic will change A.A. for the foreseeable future. I am hoping we can get back to some sense of normalcy soon. I hope that our landlords will let us meet in person again someday. As with most things, change is inevitable. More people are working from home and I think this will continue. We have struggled with saying the Lord's Prayer in unison. If that is the worst part of the meeting, I am okay with this. The program has taught me coping skills over the last 22 years and I have used all of them this year. As it was 22 years ago, I need to stay away from the first drink and get to as many meetings as I can. My life depends on it. I went to any length to get that drink; now I need to go to any length to stay sober. As we always hear, “This too shall pass.”

—Tony F., North Haven

This Side of the Grass

According to the national statistics for longevity, I have exceeded my expiration date. Every morning that I wake up on this side of the grass, I say a prayer of thanksgiving. If I woke up on the other side, then I guess I would be . . . ? Well, I am not going to worry about it. My goal on “this side” is to continue to build my life in sobriety. In this “life in sobriety” I choose to be fair and compassionate - in all my affairs - to the best of my ability. I came into AA at the ripe old age of 79 and didn't truly embrace the program for two more years. The swath of my drinking days reaches back more than six decades to my time in college. And so, accompanied by sorrowful violin music, I will share with you my tale of woe.

It never occurred to me that I was an alcoholic. I drank like most people around me, or so I thought. Sure, I got tipsy on occasion and I guess I got drunk once in a while. But hey, I was a “happy drunk” and I would say that as if it qualified



my drinking. If the drinks were free, this cheapskate would be parked at the bar. I thought I was “normal”, but I did have the lingering feeling that I was not quite right. My daughter would take the bottle of Sambuca off the table when I had dinner at her house. I kept refilling the espresso cup long after the coffee was gone. It tasted good and I was getting a nice buzz.

In my journey to sobriety I circled Steps 1 and 2 for quite some time. Step 3 was a bit of a hill. I leveled off at Steps 4 and 5. I knew I was making progress in the program and saw the impact it was having on my life. I was beginning to pay attention: “Progress, not perfection”, I can buy into that. I acknowledge that I am an imperfect human trying to function in a very imperfect world. I can turn any of those “imperfects” into reasons to drink. Or, I can turn to my Higher Power for strength and direction. To be sober or not be sober, it is not a question (Shakespeare, I think).

What I am trying to say is this: my life in sobriety is so much better than when I was drinking. Going forward I must learn to keep my resentments in the past, keep my hope in the future, and keep today as my “now”. One day at a time, on this side of the grass.

—Al Di.

Full Circle

They’ve always said I’d wind up in prison. I vividly remember the sound coming from the cell next to mine. The young man’s voice pleading to be left alone, his anguished cries for assistance and the sickening thud that followed. I swore on that second night at Clinton that I wouldn’t return and that I wouldn’t fall prey to whatever had befallen the guy in cell f-132. I was half right.

The memory of that period of incarceration has had a heavy influence on my life for years to come. The fear it instilled in me gave me my first period of abstinence from alcohol and other substances. I found a career path that would support me and my family for decades and allow me to meet, fall in love with and marry the finest person I have ever known. The dark side of that experience also left me regularly paralyzed with fear, unable to think or function. At other times I felt compelled to engage in harmful or self-destructive behavior. The inner conflict and self-loathing which I carried inevitably led to a long and painful relapse from which there seemed no escape.

When God reached out through a friend to save my life in an odd assortment of events and circumstances, I somehow knew that it was my last chance. To continue living the life I had been living meant certain death or a return to incarceration. Remaining abstinent without addressing the underlying internal struggle would be an invitation to suicide or

madness. I threw myself into recovery with both feet and never looked back.

Another series of perfectly timed non-coincidences led me to my home group. Upon my arrival at the Sunday night Back-To-Basics group, I knew in my heart that I had truly come home. Everything about the members, the format and the level of maturity in that room spoke to me of recovery, equality, fairness and a pathway to freedom. Another gift was being asked to bring the message of recovery into DOC facilities, which afforded me a certain sense of closure with the events of my past and an opportunity to be of service.

I do my level best, on a daily basis, to meet people where they are and to honor them for who they are. I take every opportunity to share my love of recovery and the lessons I have learned from my engagement in the A.A. program of action. By virtue of having had these many opportunities I have established the most remarkable relationships and am regularly reminded of the innate goodness of people and the resilience of folks in recovery.

I sit in the chapel at Osborn CI listening to a group of my FRIENDS who have formed a band called “Sons of Addiction”. As they perform before the gentlemen in the addiction services unit and invited guests, I am acutely aware of the overwhelming presence of God in the room and my heart fills with joy.

They’ve always said I’d wind up in prison

—Dan G., District 1

Never Alone

Drinking is a lonely business. Our Big Book describes the alcoholic as someone who “. . . will know loneliness as few do” (p. 152). When I was still drinking, I could feel lonely even when I was surrounded by people. AA says we don’t have to feel alone anymore. How true this is for an alcoholic in Alcoholics Anonymous!

A few years ago, when I was newly sober, I travelled to Boston from Westbrook, CT with my boss. We were meeting some clients from out of town and were going to Fenway Park to see the Red Sox play the Detroit Tigers on a Thursday night.

We parked the car and walked to the Cask n’ Flagon, a rather famous watering hole near the ballpark. The three fellows I was with wanted to have a couple of beers to enhance the Fenway experience. No one in our party knew I was in recovery. A crowded bar with Red Sox revelers can be a pretty lonely place for an alcoholic. I sipped my seltzer with lemon and felt sorry for myself.

Suddenly, my mobile phone rang. It was Splint B., a member of my home group calling. It was crowded and noisy in the



place and I wouldn't be able to hear him, so I let it go to voicemail. Like I said, it was a Thursday. Splint used to call me every so often to see if I was going to an A.A. meeting, so I figured that was what the call was about.

Funny thing though – for a moment, in that crowded, noisy bar with people getting drunk and carried away, that phone ringing somehow made me feel less lonely. I have friends, I thought, and more than that, friends that can just call out of the blue to say hello. They might ask what I'm doing, or if I'm going to an A.A. meeting. I felt humble and grateful.

Finally, it was getting near game time and it was time to leave the (in)famous Cask n' Flagon and head towards the ballpark. I saw that Splint had left a voicemail, so I decided to listen to it. A cheery voice came out, "Hey Dave, I'm here with 40,000 Red Sox fans and can't see you for some reason. What's up with that?" He was at Fenway Park, too; my loneliness vanished!

We got to Yawkey Way, the street outside the park and as I got in line for a Reuben sandwich, I heard a familiar voice call out - "Dave, fancy meeting you here!" Somehow, among those thousands of people in the street, Splint found me.

It was then that I understood the power of staying close to Alcoholics Anonymous. In the Big Book chapter "Working with Others," we're told that "Frequent contact with newcomers and with each other is the bright spot in our lives" (p. 89).

I understood the power and meaning of that passage, more than ever. As a member of Alcoholics Anonymous, I don't ever have to be or feel lonely again.

—Dave W., Primary Purpose Group, Middletown

2020 THANKSGIVING ALKATHONS

Litchfield:

Thurs., November 26 @ 6:00 pm – 9:00 pm
Online only (formerly held at First Congregational Church)
Link: visit ct-.org

2020 CHRISTMAS ALKATHONS

Cheshire:

Thurs., December 24 @ Noon – Fri., December 25 @ Noon
Online only (formerly held at Cheshire Grange)
Link: visit ct-aa.org

Litchfield:

Thurs., December 24 @ 8:00 pm – 1:00 am and Fri., December 25 @ 8:00 am – 12:00 noon
Online only (formerly held at First Congregational Church)
Link: visit ct-aa.org



Save the Date

Area 11 A.A. Round Up

November 22, 2020; 9 AM – 3 PM

Online only

Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82906702970?pwd=Rkp4c0wySndWbE1ZzZmZDJvbjZaZz09>

Meeting ID: 829 0670 2970 Passcode: 616965

Access by Phone: Call (929) 205 6099

The Connecticut State Conference of Young People in AA (CSCYPAA) 35th Conference

November 27 – 29, 2020

Online only

Link: visit <https://cscypaa.org/>

Please refer to ct-aa.org for information regarding state-wide recovery events and online meetings.

Christmas and New Year's
Alkathons:
For publication in the December/January
Alki-Line, please submit Alkathon
information (including on-line access) by
November 15, 2020
email: alki-line@ct-aa.org

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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