Dry vs. Sober Holidays (A.A. Never Closes)

My first sponsor made it clear that if I wanted to stay sober, I would need to take suggestions. The first suggestion was for me to call her daily. She explained to me that I needed to get into a routine of calling her so when not if the time came, the phone would not seem to weigh 500 lbs. Being the good alcoholic that I am, I decided not to call my sponsor for two weeks during the holidays. I justified it by thinking that she was probably too busy. She had a family, a job, I didn’t need to bother her. I was eight months sober; I thought I would be fine. I didn’t drink and I didn’t go to meeting. As you can imagine I was a delight to be around. I made it through my first Christmas sober and I was filled with self-pity and resentment. Finally called my sponsor. I was angry as I watched my family get drunk and have a good time while I sulked in the corner. When my sponsor asked why I hadn’t called, I snapped back stating “you didn’t call me either!” I had convinced myself that she must not care much about me or she would have called! She told me that I needed to be responsible for making an effort to stay sober. If I wanted the sobriety that she had, I would pick up the phone. She also shared with me that she did the same thing in early sobriety and assumed her sponsor would call her. Her phone never rang.

Now that I get the privilege and honor to sponsor and serve sponsor other women, I suggest they call me every day. I share my experience and reasoning for this. I have made exceptions and softened a bit with this recommendation as I have continued to stay sober. My first sponsor wouldn’t even reply to texts except to respond “call me.” I do agree with her that a text message is not a substitute for a phone call but, at times, we have to meet newcomers where they are.

My sponsor made it very clear that A.A. never closes. The holidays were not an excuse to miss a meeting or stop taking suggestions. By the time my second sober holiday season came around I had learned about alkahons and I even signed up to bring a meeting into an institution on Christmas night. Another Christmas Day, I hit five meetings with my newly sober brother and it was amazing. I have also rung in many New Year’s at sober dances and young people conferences. I can be present, happy, joyous, and free any day of the year because thankfully for us, A.A. never closes.

— Katie B., Portland

Navidades secas vs. sobrias (A.A. Nunca Cierra)

Mi primera madrina me dejó claro que si yo quería mantenerme sobria, yo iba a tener que seguir las sugerencias. La primera sugerencia fue que yo la llamara a diario. Ella me explicó que yo necesitaba entrar en una rutina de llamarla para que cuando, no si es que se presentara el momento, el teléfono no pareciera pesar 500 libras. Siendo la buena alcohólica que soy, decidí no llamar a mi madrina por dos semanas durante las navidades. Lo justifiqué pensando que ella probablemente estaba muy ocupada. Ella tenía una familia, un trabajo, que yo no necesitaba molestarla. Yo tenía ocho meses de sobriedad; pensé que yo estaría bien.

No bebí y no fui a las reuniones. Como podrán imaginar, yo era un encanto como compañía. Yo había logrado pasar mi primera Navidad sobria y llena de autocompasión y resentimiento llamé a mi madrina. Yo estaba enfadada mientras tenía que ver a mi familia emborracharse y pasarla bien mientras yo me quedaba malhumorada por una esquina. Cuando mi madrina me preguntó por qué no había llamado, yo le respondí de un ladrillo “¡tú tampoco me llamaste a mí!” ¡Yo me había convenido a mí misma que a ella yo no le importaba mucho o de lo contrario ella me hubiese llamado! Ella me dijo que yo necesitaba ser responsable de hacer un esfuerzo para mantenerme sobria. Si yo quería la sobriedad que ella tenía, yo levantaría el teléfono. Ella también me compartió que había hecho lo mismo al inicio de su sobriedad y solo supuse que su madrina la iba a llamar. Su teléfono nunca sonó.

Ahora que tengo el privilegio y honor de amadrinar y amadrinar en el servicio a otras mujeres, yo les sugiero que me llamen a mí todos los días. Comparto mi experiencia y el razonamiento detrás de esto. He hecho algunas excepciones
When I Came To

“Come to” is a phrase that I would use in the morning, afternoon and evening when I would come out of my alcohol-fueled darkness. I look back now and understand that the darkness of my drinking kept the sunlight from penetrating my befuddled existence. I appeared happy in my darkness. I was hiding in my darkness . . . hiding from myself . . . almost as if I didn’t want to exist anymore.

Now that I am an active member in the community of A.A., I have added another word to the phrase making it “came to believe”. I have had the dubious pleasure of living a long life and have experienced several lifetimes. I was an engineer, a family man, a farmer, a store owner, an entrepreneur, and finally a retired gentleman. In all of those lifetimes, I came to believe in a whole bunch of things. I came to believe in the “American Dream” and lost it. I came to believe in a Christian God and lost it. I came to believe that you married it was for life, but it wasn’t true for me. I came to believe in alcohol and it tried to kill me.

My experience with a god has wandered from Catholicism through a Pentecostal movement, then a slide across Wiccan concepts with a brief stop with Druids and a bounce to a belief in a god of the universe. Something created me and the things around me. I can’t begin to conceptualize what a god is or does. However, I do believe in a power greater than myself because I have experienced that power.

There was no bolt of lightning nor a profound moment. It all started when I could not make it past the Third Step. Give my life over to the care of God? As a disciplined and educated engineer, I was in control of my life. I can slow down my drinking using my intellect and willpower. I was not giving up control and that was that. Or so I thought.

During the first few years, I attended A.A. meetings and still drank. I would drink before a meeting, drink after a meeting, and drink when there wasn’t a meeting. In desperation, I told God that I was willing to be made willing to make a decision to turn my will and life over to the care of God as I understood God. What a coward I am. I won’t do it, but if you make me do it, that’s okay.

It happened so quietly that I didn’t notice. One day I forgot to drink, then another day, then the week went by. I suddenly realized that I had not had a drink nor did I want one. “Hey, what just happened?” And so, that was that. The God of my understanding, my Higher Power, did for me that which I was afraid to do and unwilling to do. My desire for a drink was lifted from me, not by my will or intellect, but by the grace of my Higher Power.

When I came to, I came to believe in a Higher Power and a whole new lifetime opened up. I am living a life of sobriety, one day at a time.

—Al Di.
Heard in the Rooms

"Your mind is a dangerous neighborhood. Don’t go there alone."

"The big difference between an alcoholic and God is that God doesn’t wake up in the morning and think he’s an alcoholic."

"The monkey is off my back but the circus is still in town."

"Feelings aren’t facts."

"If you’re gonna pick up, pick up a phone."

"The things you own end up owning you."

"Switching your drink of choice is like changing seats on the Titanic."

"More will be revealed later."

"Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and knowing exactly how it’s going to come out."

"The research has already been done."

"Be spiritually fit before you do anything."

"First the man takes a drink, then the drink takes a drink, then the drink takes the man."

"My unaided will is no defense against the first drink."

"It’s hard to hit a moving target."

When I Arrived

When I arrived to our fellowship in 1984, I started my day by reading a book, Twenty-Four Hours a Day. I found it, like most new things, to be over my head and confusing.

After a few years, and a fresh pass through the Steps using the original recipe (Big Book), I read Step Eleven from it. It contains promises I get every morning.

For me, the discipline suggested in the Big Book is harder, but much more rewarding and is the only one I’ve used daily since 1986.

-John P., Wallingford Tuesday Big Book Study

From Behind the Curtain

“I am Oz the Great and Terrible. Who are you and why do you seek me?” When someone at a meeting used the phrase “behind the curtain” in referring to how he first perceived God, I reflected upon my thoughts about God. For years He/She/It seemed far away, beyond the clouds in the sky. Behind a curtain if you will.

The blessings I receive when I attend A.A. meetings never cease to amaze me. A room full of ex-drunks, of all ages, of all races, of all . . . has shown me immense wisdom through each of their shares. Wow. In a new life without alcohol I have learned a new peace, a new freedom, a new happiness. You know the rest. The clincher for me was to drag my Higher Power out from behind the curtain and make God a daily part of my life. We have daily conversations up close and personal. These are usually about Step Ten which I often consult when difficulties arise with the wonderful woman with whom I live.

I was raised a Catholic. My mother and I would attend Mass where we would sit at the back of the church. My father would attend the local Italian Bocce Club and hang out with his drinking buddies. To me, the priest was making little white wafers and drinking wine. What did I know? I was there because my mother wanted me to learn something, I guess.

In early adult years, I became involved in Christianity (as if it is different from Catholicism), the Pentecostal movement, the Charismatic movement, and the Born-Again movement. In later adult years, I came to embrace the Wiccan concepts of a God of the universe. At about that time I was coming to understand the aspects of religion, faith and spirituality. Now in my senior adult life, I have come to embrace yet another aspect of God - the God of my Higher Power. Now I realize the God of my understanding has finally stepped out from behind the curtain to reveal Itself to me. God has become my personal embodiment of goodness and righteousness, my buddy, my go-to-person when I have doubts.

In A.A. I have learned that it doesn’t matter if your Higher Power is a doorknob, the A.A. group or the Pope. We embrace our Power. I use the word “our” in a possessive sense because I believe there is no one-size-fits-all God. My God is very, very personal to me. My relationship with the God of my understanding had taken a long journey from that eight-year-old child to this eighty-three-year-old child in wrinkled skin.

“Who are you?” says God.

I responded, “It is I, a confused alcoholic that stands here before you.”

“Why do you seek me?”

“I have the desire for a new life.”

-Al Di.

Gratitude

Gratitude is just about the finest attribute we can have, and how deeply we of A.A. realize this. Together, we count and ponder our blessings of life, of service, of love.

-Bill W., December 1970
2020 Christmas Alkathons

Cheshire: (THIS EVENT HAS BEEN CANCELLED)

District 7:
Thurs., December 24 @ 5:00 pm – Fri., December 25 @ 4:00 pm
Online only; meetings on the hour, every hour
Zoom access:
Meeting ID: 833-0886-2606
Passcode: 819561
Audio only call in: 929-205-6099
For more info contact: dcm7-3a@ct-aa-d7.org

District 3:
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)
Zoom access:
Meeting ID: 287-769-878
Passcode: ogcrew
Link: visit ct-aa.org

2020 New Year’s Alkathons

District 7:
Thurs., December 31 @ 7:00 pm – Fri., January 1 @ 8:00 am
Online only; meetings on the hour, every hour
Zoom access:
Meeting ID: 848-5595-2589
Passcode: 123456
For more info contact: dcm7-3a@ct-aa-d7.org

District 3:
Thurs., December 31 @ 8:00 pm – 1:00 am and Fri., January 1 @ 8:00 am – 12:00 noon
Online only (formerly held at First Congregational Church)
Link: visit ct-aa.org

Responsibility Pledge
I am responsible. When anyone, anywhere reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there.
And for that, I am responsible!
How to reach A.A.: 866-STEPS12

Save the Date

Area 11 Public Information Workshop
Saturday, December 12, 2020; 10 am
No registration needed
Zoom access:
Meeting ID: 893-6573-3119
Passcode: 230395
Audio only call in: 929-205-6099
Link: visit ct-aa.org

Northeast Regional A.A. Service Assembly (NERAASA)
February 26 – 28, 2021
It’s Virtual!
For more info contact: www.neraasa.org
OR
Check out this video: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1mswW2q3fOB4sJfFDJnZKVEvVM0_6j2x/view

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

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 uno de los siguientes:
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.
This is an honest fellowship; we presume all submissions are original or in the public domain. Following publication all copyright reverts to the owner.
Para ponerse en contacto con A.A., llame: 855-ESPANCT