

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

It has been an absolute pleasure creating The Wagon Wheel for these last three publications. I can't tell you all how much I appreciate the opportunity to be of service to Area 18, and how grateful I am to have been asked to take this service position on. Please continue to send in your stories, artwork, and poems of experience, strength and hope for whomever is the editor for The Wagon Wheel in 2018. Thank you again. It's a beautiful day to be sober!

*Angela D.

UPCOMING EVENTS

2017 Idaho Area 18 Fall Assembly

October 6, 7, 8, 2017

Burley Convention Center, Burley ID

District 8 Halloween Party

October 28, 2017 Alano Club

3820 W. Cassia, Boise, ID

Mocktoberfest

October 28, 2017 Central Office, Boise, ID

2017 Area 76 Fall Convention

November 3, 4, 5, 2017

Ramada Plaza, 2009 South Douglas HWY Gillette, WY

District 5 Gratitude Dinner

November 10, 2017 601 West Grove St. Boise, ID

Lollapalooza III of AA

March 15-18, 2018

Hotel ML, Mount Laurel, NJ

Notes

THE WAGON WHEEL

OCT. 2017

IDAHO AREA 18 NEWSLETTER

EDITOR, ANGELA D.

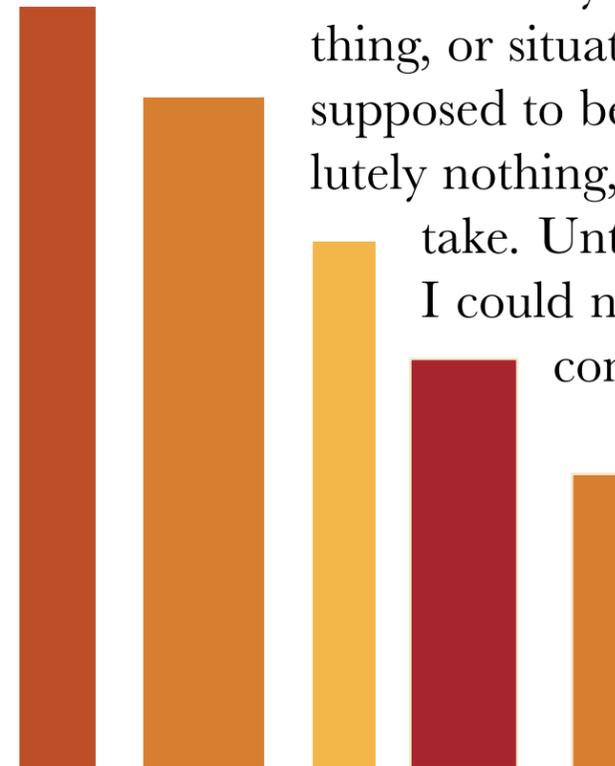
ACCEPTANCE

BIG BOOK PG. 417

And acceptance is the answer to *all* my problems today. When I am disturbed, it is because I find some person, place, thing, or situation - some fact of my life - unacceptable to me, and

I can find no serenity until I accept that person, place, thing, or situation as being exactly the way it is supposed to be at this moment. Nothing, absolutely nothing, happens in God's world by mistake. Until I could accept my alcoholism, I could not stay sober; unless I accept life

completely on life's terms, I cannot be happy. I need to concentrate not so much on what needs to be changed in the world as on what needs to be changed in me and my attitudes.



HOW DARK IT IS BEFORE THE DAWN

FROM LISA P.

So, I have been asked to write an article for the Wagon wheel newsletter...

Haven't a clue what to write. However, the helpful computer hints says to just write about anything until the inspiration comes.

This is what I am doing...

Hello, my name is Lisa and I am alcoholic. My sobriety date is November 3, 2006. I started drinking at the age of twelve, I am now forty-nine years old. The last just about 11 years have been truly those of pure magic. These are the best years of my life. I do not regret my past today. I believe that every experience built me. That every experience has a bit of gratitude woven into it. My past my greatest assest. My past my greatest teacher. It was not always like that. Many years I lived in the hell of my own mind and making. Many years I allowed the power of my disease to consume me, whatever phase in that development at that time might have been. So many phases. Looking back on it, alcohol had been my master from the gate. I was its obedient slave. Thirsting for more of what goodness I thought it was feeding me. Good times, great stories, confidences, my Mom always called it a can of guts. Well it turned on me like that boomerang the book talks of and ripped me to shreds numerous times. Diluted my thinking, diluted my choices, diluted my everything. Misery became the Masters name. It did take away ev-erything worthwhile in my life, homes, jobs, relationships, family, freedom, health, self-esteem and ultimately my connection with my own Soul. I started doing things I swore I would never do... compromised all of my morals just to have one more. Everything I touched turned to stone. Hell, I turned to stone. Angry, self-pitting, hopeless and completely chained to that evil and corroding thread. The time finally came, like it had numerous times be-fore, I could not live the way I was living my life anymore. However, there was a difference in my state of mind in that moment...I realized that it did not matter how much I poured down my throat that last day, (how dark it is before the dawn), I could not get drunk. I could not get that effect produced by the alcohol I chased for so many years. Alcohol left me completely defeated, beaten, exhausted and alone.

I had a moment of clarity, with a few words of desperation to a God I really had no faith in, I roared in complete desperation one more time for "It" to prove to me "It" was real. A huge rush flowed in and through me...My Cre-ator was near and gave me a sign. Lilacs in the early morning of early November blowing through and through me as if I was standing and smelling the flower in mid spring. My mind was blown and I was awake. I was awake enough in that moment to know what had just happen, my first conscious contact with my Creator. Its voice, in my voice told me to get up of my @#\$ and put one foot in front of the other and start doing things different. So, I got up, because literally that is exactly where I was, on my @#\$. I starting moving forward from that moment on that morning and have been moving forward ever since. There were a lot of consequences I had been running

"MISERY BECAME THE MASTERS NAME."

from and I became willing to face them all. The fear to remain living my life the way I had been living it, terrified me. Thus, was the day I became teach-able. Please teach me how to live. I don't have a clue and I so desperately I want to live. I started being guided to follow a few suggestions, I was willing. I was willing to start my new life out in a half-way house. I was willing to ride my bike in the middle of winter to everywhere I was needing to be. I was willing to get a sponsor. I was willing to be of service. I was willing to be open minded to a whole new way of thinking and being. I was willing to

set aside my differences and take in all the similarities. I was willing to do step work with a sponsor. I was opened minded to her insight into me. I began to trust that maybe this thing could work.

FILL IN THE BLANK!

Made a _____ and _____ moral
inventory of ourselves

_____ is the _____ foundation of
all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place
principles before personalities

Continued to take _____ and
when we were wrong _____ admitted it

Each group has but one _____
_____ - to carry its message to the
alcoholic who still suffers

We admitted we were _____ over alcohol
- that our lives had become _____

_____ asked Him to remove our

The only _____ for A.A. _____ is a desire to stop drinking

Our common welfare should come first; _____ recovery depends upon A.A.

We're entirely ready to have God remove all these _____ of _____

Each group should be _____ except in matters affecting other _____ or
A.A. as a whole

_____ to God, to _____ and to another human being the exact nature
of our _____

Every A.A. group ought to be fully _____ declining outside _____

purpose spiritual personal
Anonymity membership
wrongs promptly searching
powerless requirement
contributions shortcoming
fearless unmanageable
groups defects inventory
Admitted Humbly
self-supporting, ourselves,
character autonomous primary
personal unity

12 STEPS OF A SPONSOR

1. I will not help you stay and wallow in limbo.
2. I will help you grow to become more productive by your own definition.
3. I will help you become more autonomous, more loving to your self, more free to continue becoming the authority of your own living.
4. I cannot give you dreams or "fix you up," simply because I cannot.
5. I cannot give you growth or grow for you. You must grow yourself by facing reality, grim as it may seem at times.
6. I cannot take away your loneliness or pain.
7. I cannot sense your world for you, evaluate your goals, or tell you what is best for you in your world. You have your own world.
8. I cannot convince you of the crucial choice of choosing the scary uncertainty of growing over the safe misery of not growing.
9. I want to be with you and know you as a rich and growing friend, yet I cannot get close to you when you choose not to grow.
10. When I begin to care for you out of pity, when I begin to lose trust in you, then I am toxic, bad, and inhibiting for you and for me.
11. You must know - my help is conditional. I will be with you, hang in there with you, as long as I continue to get even the slightest hints that you are trying to grow.
12. If you can accept all of this, then perhaps we can help each other to become what God meant for us to be... mature adults, leaving childishness forever to little children.

Through all of these new actions in my life I started to get different results. I started to feel that nearest of my Creator more and more. I began to rely upon it. Today my Creator and me are woven so strongly together. I have healed and continue to expand my Spiritual Life. All the things in the beginning that I was willing to do, and throughout my journey, I remain willing. My life and recovery have many phases in it development. Finding another deeper path into me.

There is a passage in the Big Book that to this day remains my favorite:

Alcoholics Anonymous - Fourth Edition - Personal story page 475 - *Twice Gifted*

"Some years have passed and as I look back from the clarity of this moment, I know that the way here for me could not have been by an easier path. I would not have willing stopped the course my life was on. I needed harsh reality to see the damage that alcohol abuse causes, in so many ways. I needed to be forced into acceptance and humility. My physical being has certainly undergone a transformation, but the major transformation has been spiritual. The hopelessness has been replaced by abundant hope and sincere faith. The people of Alcoholics Anonymous have provided a haven where, if I remain aware and keep my mind quiet enough, my Higher Power leads me to amazing realizations. I find joy in my daily life, in being of service, in simply being. I found rooms full of wonder-ful people, and for me each one of the Big Books promises have come true. The things that I have learned from my own experiences, from the Big Book, and from my friends in A.A.- patience, acceptance, honesty, humility, and true faith in a Power Greater than myself – are the tools I use to live my life, this precious life. Today my life is filled with miracles big and small, not one of which would ever have come to pass had I not found the doors of Alcoholics Anonymous."

Today my life is filled with miracles big and small, not one of which would ever have come to pass had I not found the doors of Alcoholics Anonymous." As I heal and grow, I give. As I give I receive. As I receive... I see I have never had it so good.

I'm Lisa and I am Alcoholic.

LIFE SUCKS BETTER SOBER

FROM SHANNON C.

It's been a couple of weeks now since I'd received some overwhelming bad news. Actually, these past couple of years has just been one devastating blow after another. Just when I thought I was on the other side of one heart-break, then another would hit. I have to admit, this one threw me over the top. I went through all kinds of emo-tions for the next few days from desolation, to disbelief and denial, to grief, to guilt, to fear and all nasty feelings that can get an alcoholic like me into big trouble. Then I became very angry. I became very angry at my Higher Power. I was more than angry. I was livid. I was ready to give it all up. I was ready to give up prayer, meditation, the 12 steps, meetings and the fellowship and service. I wanted to quit everything that was good in my life. Instead,

"THIS IS LIFE. LIFE HAPPENS. LIFE CAN SUCK SOMETIMES." I called and met with my sponsor and then I went to a meeting. I wanted to spew my venom and toxic attitude as a topic for the meeting. But, when the chair asked for a topic, someone else beat me to it. Her topic

was, What has A.A. done for you? Humph! She then started to describe all the won-derful things that she now has in her life since she's been sober. Eventually, the meeting turned into a gratitude meeting and slowly my anger and fear started to become right sized and acceptance and surrender began to set in. This is life. Life happens. Life can suck sometimes. I am not immune from the troubles and woes in life just because I got sober. The difference today is how I walk through

these life dilemmas. So, I began to assess my thoughts of what A.A. has done for me, beyond sobriety, during the most difficult of days. I realized that it has taught me how to have a relationship with a kind, loving and tolerant Higher Power on a level that I would call a friendship. And like some friendships, it can be tumultuous at times. But, I also know I can't live without it. I cannot give up the faith and that my Higher Power will be here for me and will carry me through. I use to live without faith and it took me to a very dark place. I know I don't want to go back to that emptiness and despair. I use to run from my feelings because I couldn't stand how painful they were. Today, I can be, for the most part, comfortable in my uncomfortableness. I am realizing just how empowering acceptance and surrender can be. I am open to the mystery of how it can all turn out better than I could have ever imagined it could be. I can live in the now. I don't have to have the guilt or regret of yesterday or the fear of what the future holds. Even though I still travel to both yesterday and tomorrow, I can always bring myself back to the now. By doing that, it can give me some sense of serenity even when calamity surrounds me. You all have taught me how to walk through (not around) these obstacles one step at a time, one day at a time, without hurting myself or anyone else in the process. And then you all have taught me how to turn these difficulties into something that I can use to help another alcoholic and my loved ones. That is such a gift! To be able to help someone else through the same thing that I am going through or have gone through. The question was What has A.A. done for you? With all that it has given me, I should be asking What can I do for A.A.? I'm sure that I will never feel like I can pay back what has been given to me but I'll keep trying. I love you and I love Alcoholics Anonymous. Thank you for keeping me sober (and sane) today.

Love to all!
Shannon C.

HOPE

FROM JON S.

You cannot make a mistake, you can only make a decision that will be your next best step. There is no reason to hesitate when you know that you have nothing to lose. And losing is not an act of God, it is a thought in the mind of man. Those words were given to me by Neal Donald Walsh and they are so true. When we make the "decision" to finally surrender to the program of recovery, great things will follow and it doesn't matter what life throws your way, with the help of your Higher Power and the Twelve Steps of recovery, we can navigate through this thing called life with dignity and grace. This has been my experience, my truth and this is my story- Over the past couple of years, life has given me challenges that without the program of AA and my Higher Power, I would now be lost (or dead). I was blessed enough to be married to my best friend and the love of my life and that blessing I will be forever grateful for. Over the past couple of years, I watched another disease, cancer, very slowly take my girl from me. Sheri had a brain tumor that we dealt with for 19 years 3 months and in her final two years of life, the tumor caused a great deal of suffering. I was so incredibly blessed to be there for her every step of the way, never leaving her side. I had my family, both of blood and of AA with me every step. I had the Twelve Steps and most of all, a relationship with my Higher Power that carried me through the most difficult time in my life, with dignity and grace. I was by my wife's side when she took her last breath and went home. I tell you this story not for pity or any type of accolade, but for hope. If right now you are going through something in life that seems insurmountable or seemingly too difficult to bear, I leave you with this message- If you do the deal (as outlined in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous) Stay close to your Higher Power, you WILL make it through whatever challenges life gives you. I'm not unique or special in any way and if a drunk like me can go through what I went "through", you can too. So stay close and never give up Hope!

THE POWER OF PRAYER

FROM THE GRAPEVINE, NOV 2016

This article is from the "Alcoholism at Large" section of the Grapevine which states that, "The purpose of these pages is to offer information that may further readers' understanding of the medical, legal and social aspects of alcoholism; the severity and international scope of the illness; and the worldwide efforts being made to combat it. Publication here does not imply endorsement or affiliation. AA does not imply endorsement or affiliation. AA does not conduct or participate in research, nor does it hold any opinion on research conducted by others."

In the first study to explore brain physiology in AA members, researchers from the New York University Langone Medical Center found that members who recited AA prayers after viewing cringing-related images reported less craving for alcohol after praying than after just reading a newspaper.

The recent study measured the impact on 20 AA members using functional magnetic resonance imaging of different neural response to alcohol-craving-inducing images obtained in response to three conditions: after reading of AA prayers, after reading irrelevant news, and with passive viewing.

Compared to the other two conditions, the prayer condition was associated with a relative reduction in self-reported craving and with engagement of neural mechanisms that reflect control of attention and emotion.

"This finding suggests that there appears to be an emotional response to alcohol triggers, but that it's experienced and understood differently when someone has the protection of the AA experience," says senior author Marc Galanter, MD, Professor of Psychiatry at NYU Langone.

In Galanter's decade-long research into the role of spirituality in long-term AA members, he and his colleagues have found that members undergo a transition from initially craving alcohol to a new status where they reported little or no craving. This reduction in cravings according to Dr. Galanter, is associated with the amount of time that passed following a "spiritual awakening" in AA, which marks a transition to a different attitude towards drinking.

"Our current findings open up a new field of inquiry into physiologic changes that may accompany spiritual awakening and perspective changes in AA members and others," says Galanter. He says the study results also support the validity of a long-term AA experience in terms of physiologic changes in the brain.

- The American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse, March 2016

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