

WAGON WHEEL

"We are not a glum lot"

March 2015

Idaho Area 18 Newsletter

Editor, Kathy H.



Dear God,
Please help me to set aside anything I think I know about myself, my disease, the Big Book, the 12 Steps, the Program, the Fellowship, all spiritual terms, and especially what I think I know about you, God, so that I may have an open mind and a new experience with all of these things... and You.
Amen.

The Three Plans Of Life

Brian M.

Lunch Bunch Group

Idaho Falls, ID

The other day in an AA meeting I heard a member share that, “If you want to make God laugh, just tell Him your plans.” Perhaps there is some truth to that statement for I do know that most plans include decisions to be made and actions to be taken that can be affected by our own shortcomings and agendas.

Following the spiritual path of Alcoholics Anonymous I began to realize how difficult and significant decision making can be. It was impressed upon me early in sobriety that the basis for my making decisions was to try to be sure that it was in line with God’s will. That simple guidance made it fairly clear what my decisions were to be, which was pretty much everything that I did not want to do. But this, too, changed with the evolution of my sobriety.

Although simple in principle a summary of the AA program of recovery, “Trust God, Clean House, and Help Others” was difficult for me to do. This required action that was for the most part contrary to my selfish and self-centered make-up. But later on in sobriety through the use of the Steps I began to experience the promise, “We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us.” Although far from perfect my decision making today goes well beyond my previous capabilities to make healthy and sound decisions. This I attribute to not only not taking that first drink but also to practicing the Twelve Steps of AA.

One day I recall sitting in my office at work reflecting back on some of the incredibly bad choices and decisions I had made over the years. Later, after sharing my history of questionable decision making during my home group’s meeting it occurred to me why I had made those unwise choices. As a person who likes to set goals for himself, the achievement of the goals required some planning. It was here that I discovered that there are at least three life plans. The first plan is my plan; second, yours and everyone else’s plan that might involve me; and third, God’s plan.

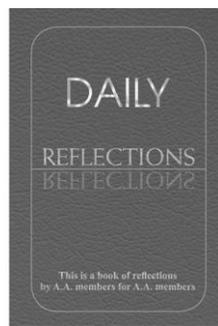
The first plan includes my personal and professional goals and aspirations. Following this plan can lead to either growth or self-destruction depending upon how close or far it is strays from doing God’s will. Prior to finding sobriety many of my unhealthy choices were caused by untreated alcoholism that suppressed the normal maturation process that non-alcoholics enjoy. But even in sobriety I can still be given to bouts of questionable planning and decision making.

The second plan comes with being a member of society. Like the previous plan it sometimes comes with expectations that can be less than honorable or inconsistent with my personal values. Peer pressure had a near deadly effect on me by preempting the development of a value that I now protect and honor: “To thine own self be true.” Or, this kind of plan if properly prepared and executed can yield great results for those affected by it. My annual performance plan at work is an example of a plan that can produce positive results for myself and my company if I follow it.

The third plan is God’s plan. Although this plan may be hard to discern and follow, it has never led me astray. I have found that seeking and doing God’s plan oftentimes require the assistance of others who might be more knowledgeable or more experienced with interpreting His plan than I am.

Misinterpretation of His plan and follow-up action can have devastating effects. On September 11, 2011, nineteen men egregiously acted upon what they believed was God's will with horrific results and consequences of continued human suffering. This is a reminder to us of what a distorted or mistaken understanding of God's will can result in.

For me, His plan has given serenity, courage, and wisdom to navigate through life unlike ever before. His plan places me closer to the God of my understanding who wants me to be "happy, joyous, and free!" Although I will occasionally place too much emphasis on the first two plans, I know that my freedom from active alcoholism and the source for courage, love and guidance all reside within His plan.



"LETS KEEP IT SIMPLE"

A few hours later I took my leave of Dr. Bob. . . . The wonderful, old, broad smile was on his face as he said almost jokingly, "Remember, Bill, let's not louse this thing up. Let's keep it simple!" I turned away, unable to say a word. That was the last time I ever saw him.

— ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS COMES OF AGE, p. 214 —

After years of sobriety I occasionally ask myself: "Can it be this simple?" Then, at meetings, I see former cynics and skeptics who have walked the A.A. path out of hell by packaging their lives, without alcohol, into twenty-four hour segments, during which they practice a few principles to the best of their individual abilities. And then I know again that, while it isn't always easy, if I keep it simple, it works.

From the book *Daily Reflections*

Copyright © 1990 by Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc.

The Circle and the Triangle

"The circle stands for the whole world of A.A., and the triangle stands for A.A.'s Three Legacies of Recovery, Unity, and Service. Within our wonderful new world, we have found freedom from our fatal obsession. That we have chosen this particular symbol is perhaps no accident. The priests and seers of antiquity regarded the circle enclosing the triangle as a means of warding off spirits of evil, and A.A.'s circle and triangle of Recovery, Unity, and Service has certainly meant all of that to us and much more." (Bill W., Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age, Bill W.'s 1955 speech)



However, in the early 1990s, A.A.W.S. decided to begin eliminating the use of the Circle and Triangle symbol on its literature, letterhead and other material. It had become too costly and too controversial for AA to try to continue to defend its rights to this symbol. It was "officially" and "legally" phased out after the 1994 General Service Conference resolved that the logo be discontinued on all Conference-approved literature. However, the symbol is still associated with Alcoholics Anonymous (and other kinds of 12-Step recovery fellowships) and has a special meaning for AA members all over the world.

The symbol of the circle and triangle is an ancient spiritual symbol meaning mind, body, and spirit together as one.

In AA, this symbol represents the three parts of our program (recovery, unity, service) which are the solutions to the three-part disease of alcoholism (physical, mental and spiritual). The circle surrounding the triangle represents Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole. The equilateral triangle is the strongest construction structure known to us. Because all three sides are equal, the triangle represents the balance required among all 36 principles in order for us to stay sober.

So the solution to our alcoholism is found in the Three Legacies (Recovery, Unity and

Service) passed down to us by our co-founders, Dr. Bob, Bill W. and the first pioneers of AA, Each legacy has twelve guiding spiritual principles. A total of 36 guiding principles. Each of spiritual principles are contained in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous (Recovery, Unity, Service), the Twelve and Twelve (Recovery and Unity), and the General Service Manual (Service).

The following is an explanation of each of the Legacies and it's Spiritual Principles:

- **Recovery/Mind/The Individual (Mental Obsession)**

- ✓ **The Set of Twelve Spiritual Principles (the 12 Steps), used to recover from alcoholism, are found in the first part of the Big Book, ending on page 164 and in the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.**
- ✓ **The 12 Steps are known as Recovery and it is the entire foundation of our program. Thus it is the bottom of the triangle, holding up Unity and Service. The physical compulsion and the mental obsession are removed when we have completed the 12 Steps. Then comes the promise, we have recovered from a “seemingly hopeless state of mind and body”. Unity and Service cannot be a part of our lives unless we are practicing these principles in all our affairs. We cannot give away what we do not have ourselves.**
- ✓ **So in order to determine whether we are in fit spiritual condition, we do a nightly inventory as part of Step 11 (BB 86:1):**

"When we retire at night, we constructively review our day. Were we resentful, selfish, dishonest or afraid? Do we owe an apology? Have we kept something to ourselves which should be discussed with another person at once? Were we kind and loving toward all? What could we have done better? Were we thinking of ourselves most of the time? Or were we thinking of what we could do for others, of what we could pack into the stream of life? But we must be careful not to drift into worry, remorse or morbid reflection, for that would diminish our usefulness to others. After making our review we ask God's forgiveness and inquire what corrective measures should be taken."

- **Unity/Body/The AA Group (Physical)**

- ✓ **The 12 spiritual principles used within the fellowship are the 12 Traditions found in the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions and the Appendix of the Big Book (Fourth Edition).**
- ✓ **The second Legacy, Unity (Body) suggests we join a home group and participate in the meetings. In early sobriety, meetings and fellowship with recovered alcoholics can help to keep a newcomer sober until they have completed their steps and found a higher power. The fellowship of AA is the group members and is fondly referred to as “the meeting before the meeting, the AA meeting, and the meeting after the meeting.”**

More importantly, however, the group and its members are responsible for making sure that the door to the meeting is open and there for the newcomer.

✓ **Do I have a group that I am committed to and involved with? When I am participating in AA and Group Conscious meetings, do I follow the 12 Traditions?**

"I am responsible. When anyone, anywhere reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA to be there. And for that: I am responsible."

- **Service/Spirituality/The AA Organization (Spiritual Malady)**

✓ **Service in AA is based in the 12 spiritual principles known as the 12 Concepts, which are found in the General Service Manual and the Appendix of the Big Book (Fourth Edition).**

✓ **"12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry the message to another alcoholic and to practice these principles in all our affairs." (BB 60:1) "PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE shows that nothing so much insures immunity from drinking than intense work with other alcoholics. It works when other activities fail. This is our TWELFTH SUGGESTION: Carry this message to other alcoholics!" (BB 89:1)**

✓ **The current service structure put in place by Bill W. And Dr. Bob allow recovered alcoholics to have resources at their disposal in order to help another alcoholic achieve sobriety.**

✓ **Am I working with other alcoholics taking them through the twelve steps? Am I practicing all of the spiritual principles inside and outside AA? Am I restless, irritable or discontent? If AA is the 12 Steps, the fellowship, and working with others, where am I with my program?**

Humorous Quotes

"If drinking is interfering with your work, you're probably a heavy drinker. If work is interfering with your drinking, you're probably an alcoholic." ~Author Unknown

"Always do sober what you said you'd do drunk. That will teach you to keep your mouth shut." ~Ernest Hemingway

"If you know someone who tries to drown their sorrows, you might tell them sorrows know how to swim." ~Quoted in P.S. I Love You, compiled by H. Jackson Brown, Jr.

"One reason I don't drink is that I want to know when I am having a good time." ~Lady Astor

"When the wine is in, the wit is out." ~Proverb

"If faith without works is dead, then Willingness without action is fantasy." ~Author Unknown

"Happiness is not having what I want... it's wanting what I have!" ~Author Unknown

"Directions to AA: Just go straight to hell and make a U-turn." ~Author Unknown

"When I die, I want to die like my grandfather—who died peacefully in his sleep. Not screaming like all the passengers in his car." ~Author Unknown

"When I sell liquor it's called bootlegging. When my customers serve it on silver trays on Lake Shore Drive, it's called hospitality." ~Al Capone during Prohibition

"I never drink water because of the disgusting things that fish do in it." ~W.C. Fields

"Once during Prohibition I was forced to live for days on nothing but food and water." ~W.C. Fields

"The problem with the designated driver program, it's not a desirable job, but if you ever get sucked into doing it, have fun with it. At the end of the night, drop them off at the wrong house." ~Jeff Foxworthy

"Reality is merely an illusion, albeit a very persistent one." ~Albert Einstein

"Quit griping about your home group, if it was perfect, you couldn't belong." ~Author Unknown

"And forgive us our trash baskets as we forgive those who put trash in our baskets." ~Author Unknown

"Don't let your worries get the best of you; remember, Moses started out as a basket case."
~Author Unknown



To submit articles to the Wagon Wheel Newsletter:

<http://www.idahoarea18aa.org/main/wagonwheel.htm>

Or, submit directly by email to:

<mailto:newsletter1@idahoarea18aa.org>

BOTTOM

Is that your Bottom coming?
Will you Awaken in a cell?
Or just another bump
On the greasy road to hell

My head will clear by noon
Or at least the pain will pass
I'm sure, today I'll Manage
To control my stupid ass

I'll stay clear away for booze
And have a sober night
To Smooth it up with Family
And Some how "see the light"

A BBQ is just the thing
I'll marinate some chops
The store is where I'm going
But the bar is where I stopped

Oh God, I'm up again
My finger hurts like mad
My ankle must be twisted
Both my knees are bad

I wonder where the car is?
I remember getting in!
I can't recall the rest
Not even where I've been

ACE Towing on the line
"Your car's here, at the yard"
It's sure that it's a total
The Cops are looking hard

Is this my bottom coming?
Or just another bump
It's Jail once again
God, get me past "this Hump"

By Doug Flemming

I received this Poem from a member at the
Area 18 2014 Fall Assembly
McCall, Idaho