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FOR YOUR INFORMATION

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The SERENITY PRAYER is a staple of the AA program; but, few members know that it is part of this longer version:

"God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change: the courage to change the things I can and the wisdom to know the difference. Living one day at a time, enjoying one moment at a time. Accepting the hardships as the pathway to peace: taking, as He did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it. Trusting that He will make all things right if I surrender to His Will. That I may be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with Him forever in the next. Amen"

The American theologian Dr. Reinhold Niebur (1892 –1971) is generally credited with being the author of those words but that has been disputed by historians for years. However, the thing that is not in dispute is the effect that the prayer has had on AA ... and the world as a whole.

TRAVELING HIGHLIGHTS



At the first of this summer, I went back to my hometown of Oklahoma City.

It was there I encountered 35 consecutive days of triple digit temperatures. If that doesn't make you "restless, irritable and discontent," then you qualify for sainthood.!

Being a newbie, there were many things I heard in AA that I really didn't understand, such as the term, 'emotional sobriety.'

I heard someone say, "Alcohol is just the symptom. An alcoholic comes equipped with the -ic. We just add the alcohol to it."

And one statement I really couldn't reconcile with

recovery was, "When I quit drinking, that's when my real problems began."

I rather fantasized that sobering up would pave my path to smooth sailing. WOW, was I wrong!!

I was 2 months sober in Oklahoma, miserable on the inside, really, really hot on the outside and I couldn't understand this elusive pink cloud everyone else seemed to be living under.

That's when I began to understand what emotional sobriety meant. I began thinking of it in the silly term of 'alcohol-icky.'

I had to learn to deal with the 'icky' part of me that got me into AA in the first place.

I had to take a very close look at myself and how I relate to myself (self-talk), to others and especially with God.

I had to learn how to live serenely sober. And I was none too happy to begin this process in the furnace

of Oklahoma where I found myself.

So how do I or you learn to do that?

Thank God that God does turn something hellacious into something beautiful.

I became involved with an AA group that helped me understand what was going on.

The OKC bunch gave all the newcomers a pamphlet with 5 suggestions:

- (1) Put the plug in the jug.
- (2) Get a sponsor and work the 12 Steps.
- (3) 90 meetings in 90 days.
- (4) Read the Big Book.
- (5) Pray to a Power greater than ourselves.

All simple suggestions that we've all heard but not easy ones to put into daily action.

They also gave me a Set-Aside Prayer:

"God, please help me set aside what I think I know about myself, this disease, this program of recovery

and You that I might have an open mind and a new experience with all these things. Please help me to be honest that Your will, not mine, may be done."

This prayer eventually wore down the wall of preconceived judgments that I had about alcoholism, AA, God and myself.

The pinnacle of the week for me was an 8:00 pm meeting at a lake on Sunday evenings.

We would watch the kite boarders surf the waters and the sun slowly go down while we discussed how we had tangibly put the program to work for us that week.

For me, it was a 35 day journey through the smoldering heat of the inferno to begin a more peaceful path toward a life of joy, freedom and service.

Submitted by: Cynthia F
Primary Purpose Group

SPOTLIGHT ON OUR GROUPS



Emmanuel Episcopal Meetings

The oldest AA group in Moore County was the Southern Pines Group and it has changed location and format many times over the years.

It was formed in 1947 and held it's meetings in a store on Broad Street and then moved to the Campbell House.

In 1982 the group moved to the Emmanuel Episcopal church in Southern Pines on Ridge Street and has been there ever since. It is now the "As Bill See's It" group and is a closed discussion meeting using topics from this book.

Three other meetings are held weekly at the church. They are all non-smoking and are closed discussion

formats.

Tuesday noon is the "Southern Pines Group" and it usually plays host to anywhere from 8 to 20 members.

Thursday at 10 am we have "The Morning Break Group". This is the only mid morning meeting in our area so far and is made up of a very small group of dedicated AA members. They are actively looking for more participation so if you want a nice morning break this may be the meeting for you.

The Friday night meeting was originally a very large speaker meeting but when the church went smokeless most of the group moved to Aberdeen. The non-smokers who remained renamed the meeting and it is now "The Higher Power Group" and meets at 8pm.

And, finally, although Al-Anon is not a part of AA, we recognize the part that they play in many alcoholic homes and note that they also have a meeting at the church. It meets at noon every Monday.



**It's ALCOHOLISM
not
ALCOHOL-WASM**

The first time I heard that saying in a meeting of AA I thought I'd heard it incorrectly.

After the meeting I approached the speaker and he assured me that I'd heard it right. I was too new in the program to truly understand the full impact of those words.

Now, after 22 years sober, I've come to not only understand that saying but to firmly believe it. Time and again I've seen people hit rock bottom. They come into the rooms of AA sick, bedraggled and desperate. They "will do anything" to stay sober.

But, more often than not they are "well" in a matter of months. They've regained their appetites, they're starting to look and feel good and recovery goes out the window.

"Alcoholic?," they say, "Not me. I can take it or leave it. I've

proved that by not drinking for X amount of days."

I feel bad as I watch them go. They've caught the dreaded "alcoholwasm" syndrome and all we can do is leave the doors open for them and hope that they will be lucky enough to find their way back in before it's too late for them, or, sadly too often, for others.

The first thing I had to have drummed into me when I started my AA journey was that stopping drinking is actually the easiest part of recovery. It's facing the "ism" that's hard. The "ism's" are the psychological and personality issues that crop up and that we couldn't get through before without drinking. We need to face them and put them behind us.

The process of changing how we deal with life and all of it's problems is a critical part of recovery and I work on it daily. The results are well worth the effort ... and it's really not that hard once I set my mind to the fact that I have alcoholism, not "alcoholwasm."

As a dear friend in AA puts it:

"Getting and staying sober is a cinch. All you have to do is ... don't drink, go to meetings, and change your whole damn life".

Ginnie D., Vass Group

AA "GEMS"

T.H.I.N.K. Is what I'm about to say Thoughtful, Helpful, Intelligent, Necessary and Kind

H.O.P.E: Help Ourselves Purge the Empitness

Sponsors are lighthouses, not foghorns. We look to them to see how they do it, not depend on them to tell us what not to do. We already know

If your drinking interferes with your work you may be a heavy drinker.
If your work interferes with your drinking you're almost surely an Alcoholic.

Isolation is the darkroom where I develop all my negatives !

You will receive many gifts from people in the program: gifts of help, time, energy, & knowledge. You will never be able to pay them back. You are not obligated to pay them back. You are obligated to pay them forward by giving away what you have when you can.

MEMBER'S MUSINGS



WOW...only in AA!

OK, so picture this. I have less than a year of sobriety but I'm willing to "go to any lengths" to stay that way.

I love AA and all it's given to me and, although it's not my Home Group, I've made a commitment to the "Keep It Simple Beginner's Group" (Friday nights at 8 at the hospital) to be the chairperson for the June meetings.

So here I am. The opening readings are over and the discussion is about to begin. I'm feeling great because it's gone real well so far. Little do I know that it's about to change.

All of a sudden a lovely, very pregnant, young woman stands up and announces in a wavering voice ... "Excuse me, I've never done this before but my water just broke!"

A moment of stunned silence is followed by a barrage of females jumping into action. Our mother to be is rushed off to the Emergency Room and we try to calm down.

The only thing I can think to say is "Keep coming back ... miracles do happen" and then we send a card around so that everyone can express their encouragement and love and somehow we manage to go on with our meeting.

The next day I take the card to the hospital (along with a Pink Teddy Bear) and find that Mother and baby are doing fine.

Just another "Wow" in AA but it's one that will be etched in my memory forever.

Submitted by: John M.
 Primary Purpose Group

Literature available ...

There is a drawer in the front lobby of the AA Aberdeen building that is labeled for the Intergroup.

It is stocked with copies of the Schedules, the History of AA the small wallet cards and the current Newsletter.

Please feel free to take what is needed for your Home Groups.

SANDY HILLS



Falling off my
 "PINK CLOUD"

HISTORICAL FACTS OF AA



*A short history of the
beginnings of Alcoholics
Anonymous ...*

*The information contained
herein is a summary of the
significant events which
have occurred in the
evolution of AA from it's
planning stages in the
early 30's through it's
formulation as a viable
organization in June of
1935 and thereafter in
America and on the inter-
national stage.*

"Not God, a History of
Alcoholics Anonymous"
by Ernest Kurtz and first
published in 1979 has been
the primary source of re-
search in the preparation
of this paper, together with
many of the quoted texts
referred to in Dr. Kurtz's
notes and bibliographies.

Reviewing the early history

of the AA program it
appears that the first
message to it's members is
that they are not infinite,
not absolute, not God ...
that every alcoholic had a
problem with control and
claimed God-like powers
and the first step toward
recovery had to be an
admission that he was
powerless over alcohol and
his life was unmanageable.

In November of 1934 on a
cold afternoon in Brooklyn
Bill Wilson and his old pal
Edwin T. (Ebby) sat at his
kitchen table. Bill offered
his friend a drink of gin &
pineapple juice but Ebby
said he was "not drinking
today". Upon further
inquiry Ebby informed Bill
that he had religion and
that he did not need it any
more.

At first Bill thought this
was good because it left
more for him but later he
wondered if Ebby's
alcoholic insanity had
become a religious one.

However the seed was
planted and became the
birth of the idea of AA ...
two alcoholics sitting down

together talking about their
problems and the irony was
that Bill Wilson, after this
binge, would never drink
another drop of alcohol,
and Ebby (the dry, religion
spouting visitor) would die
in a charity ward after three
more liquor soaked
decades.

Roland H., a young and
wealthy financial wizard
was in great despair over
his inability to control his
drinking. In 1931 he went
to Zurich for treatment by
Dr. Carl Jung and remained
there for almost a year. He
left with a great feeling of
admiration for Dr. Jung &
a new found confidence in
himself.

Unfortunately Rowland
relapsed and returned back
to Zurich as a last resort.
Dr. Jung told Rowland that
it was hopeless & that no
medical or psychiatric
treatment would be of help.
He said that the only hope
was a spiritual or religious
experience, "a genuine
conversion", which was
relatively rare.

Based on this information
Rowland joined the Oxford

Group, an Evangelical movement with successes in Europe and America. Hearing of his friend Ebby's downward flight he intervened and led him to the Group also.

The two friends introduced Bill to the Oxford Group's emphasis upon the principles of self-survey, restitution, confession and the giving of oneself to the service of others.

Bill Wilson wrote to Dr. Jung years after AA was formed and told him that his conversation with Rowland was the first link in the chain of events which led to the founding of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Wilson was, of course, referring to Dr. Jung's statement to Rowland about the hopelessness of further medical treatment and the only hope being in a spiritual experience

The early founders of AA, Bill Wilson, Dr. Bob Smith and Dr. Silkworth gained from their experiences with the Oxford Group and it's principles and they were

able to incorporate what they learned into the AA movement.

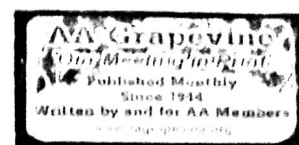
The thread which runs through the history and the success of AA from it's earliest days was their discovery that in order for the drunks who came in to get sober (and to stay sober) they had to do it together by reaching out to each other for support and encouragement.

They discovered that there was strength in numbers and, although they realized that most AA's would not normally have met or known or associated with each other their common bond was so important and so strong that they were held together admitting that they were hopeless and placing their recovery before anything else in their lives.

The miracles are there and woven into the lives of the early members and passed on to future addicts by way of inexplicable methods.

Submitted by:
Bill C.

CARRYING THE MESSAGE



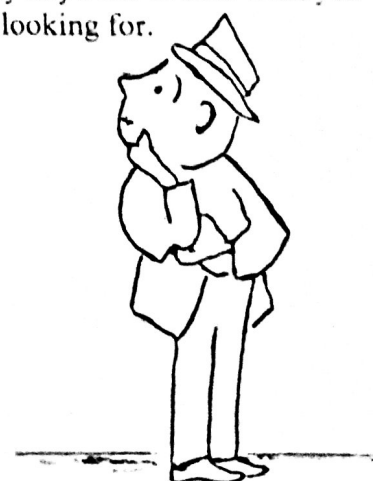
"THE GRAPEVINE"

was first published in June, 1944. Do you enjoy the magazine and want to read some of the early articles?

Now there is a way. The AA Grapevine digital archive provides access to everything ever published except for the issues of the current year.

You can find answers to questions about recovery, AA history, spirituality or get information on any number of topics concerning the fellowship.

You can search by topic, by date, by magazine department or by keyword to find what you are looking for.



www.aagrapevine.org