

February 2008

Java Journal



There is ALWAYS a way to do the right thing!

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Faith...

Written by a local recovering alcoholic.

I never thought that I would be celebrating another year of sobriety. I was such a fearful, angry, self-centered person with low self-esteem. I was stuck ... in prison and I thought I would die. No, I knew I was going to die unless I sought help.

I begged God to help me the morning of Jan 5th, 2003. I had gone on my last weekend binge, vomiting with the shakes. I made a call to a friend in the program and asked her for help - she took me to a morning meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous. I took the first step and admitted to my inner most self that I was an alcoholic.

The first 3 years of my sobriety I went to meetings 6 days a week. Through listening at each meeting, I came to believe that a power greater than myself could restore me to sanity.

This was difficult because I didn't have any guidance on spiritual matters growing up. My parents didn't believe in God. I didn't have the family support system that was necessary for spiritual growth, so God provided the fellowship and my sponsor for guidance. Making a decision to turn my life and will over to that power was a learned process, it took action on my part to get down on my knees and pray to this power that I couldn't see - this was the beginning of the foundation that was needed to help keep me sober. I have a personal relationship with this awesome power and I have learned that this power will never leave unless I block this power from my consciousness.

Prior to the program, "I was the perfect victim." I blamed my family and friends for how poorly my life had turned out. I couldn't take responsibility. That is why the 4th and 5th

steps were necessary for me to do. I could finally see that I played a huge part in all of my past relationships. I was in complete denial for so many years, it took a lot of writing and sorting out before I could see the truth of what kind of person I had become; "Character defects and all".

In addition to my sponsor, I had to seek outside help for the issues my sponsor was not able to help me with. I was very ill. God has not removed all of my defects of character, but I am willing and ask for help when my bad behaviors suddenly reappear.

Making direct amends to the people I had harmed was an enlightening process. "Forgiveness" is a wonderful part of recovery and an important part for living a spiritual based life. I try doing a daily inventory to keep myself in check and make amends when needed.

Prayer, meditation and meetings help me stay in pretty good emotional health. My higher power chose me to carry "the message" to the alcoholic who is still suffering. I can't think of a better purpose... can you?

The 12 steps, a guide to a spiritual life... If worked can change your life. I know because I continue to work them to the best of my ability every day. I owe my life to the fellowship and God. I was blind but now can see!! The gratitude I feel overwhelms me. I hope I never forget my last drunk or what keeps me sober...I'll keep coming back to listen and learn how to live life.

Now I have a better understanding that faith without work is dead. I am so blessed to be on this journey... Thank you for my 5th year of continuous sobriety.

Colleen K.



BIRTHDAYS

Bob H. 2/3/73,
with 35 years!

Margaret B.
2/15/76, with
32 years!



Concentrate on giving so that you may open yourself to receiving. Concentrate on living according to the light you have, so that you may open yourself to more light.

Thoughts Precede Feelings

from the Akron Intergroup News, January 2008

The Program has taught me that my thoughts precede my feelings. The way I feel is a product of the way I think. We cannot think ourselves into a better life. We must live ourselves each day into better thinking, and a new way of being.

Just as I must be responsible for my actions, I can also be responsible for my feelings by acknowledging them, and then try to adjust the thoughts that influence them.

As I pray for the ability to be a better person, I ask for the willingness to give up those ideas that are negative to myself, or others. Once I let go of the resistance, then new ideas began to form.

I realized that as I surrendered to the teachings of the Program, I was able to monitor my thoughts, and change them if I didn't like them. This of course, wasn't easy at first, but as I continued to apply faith, and effort, the less difficult it became.

New ideas led me to new attributes.

I began to outgrow the tendency of doing the same things, and expecting different results. I started being liberated from guilt, secrets, and shame. The things that I couldn't have comprehended in my old way of thinking, I began to see clearly.

These new ideas and attitude that I incorporated broke down some old barriers. For instance, if my old idea of thinking that I could recover by myself had continued, I wouldn't be here today. I would have remained isolated, and narrow-

minded, and never would have grasped the "WE" concept of the Program.

Without the idea to change, and my willingness to do so, I wouldn't have experienced all the comfort, joy, and strength that I've received through the Fellowship.

Letting go of the self-defeating idea that I couldn't be comfortable in my own skin really gave me the opportunity to get better acquainted with myself. I became humble enough to believe that what has worked to change the lives of others will work to change mine.

Also, if my idea of the fear of writing an article had not changed, I would have never written. I wouldn't have known how much inspiration I could be open to in the absence of that fear.

When I'm stuck in a negative idea it always contributes to my not being all that I can positively be.

It is with our attitudes, and relationships to people and things that we must learn to live.

New ideas are cultivated as our recovery progresses. We have a choice to either think positive, or negative. What we do with the ideas, and blessings we're given make a lot of difference in our life, and the lives of others.

I've been blessed with being an open-mind person. I have new friends, and sober relationships. I believe that I have positive directions, and I trust that God will continue to guide my efforts.

If I hadn't put new ideas into action, I would never have been able to know what it meant to

change, and be well thought of. Today I feel more peaceful, and secure. I can even cope better.

The consistent application of positive ideas in



(Continued on page 3)

Thoughts Precede Feelings (cont..)

(Continued from page 2)

our lives will give us rewards far greater than what we can imagine. Positive ideas make way for positive outcomes.

We have the Steps as guiding principles for



FAQ—acceptance

Question: Where can I find the part about acceptance in The Big Book?

Answer: Acceptance was an idea in a personal story introduced in the 3rd edition. It was not part of the original Big Book but an opinion expressed by the man who wrote the story.

The story appears in the Big Book along with dozens of other stories where: "you will find a wide variation in the way each teller approaches and conceives of the Power which is greater than himself. Whether we agree with a particular approach or conception seems to make little difference. Experience has taught us that these are matters about which, for our purpose, we need not be worried. They are questions for each individual to settle for himself."

"On one proposition, however, these men and women are strikingly agreed. Every one of them has gained access to, and believes in, a Power greater than himself. This Power has in each case accomplished the miraculous, the humanly impossible." -Page 50

See page 449 in the 3rd edition or page 417 in the 4th edition.

It says in part: *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*

every action that we take. The Program works, and will convince us if we'll submit to it.

By Wilma T., Sober Men and Women United



situation as being exactly the way it is supposed to be at this moment. Nothing, absolutely nothing, happens in God's world by mistake.

Apart from the story, acceptance is not discussed in the same manner in the main text of the Big Book. The sum of what chapters 1-11 have to say on acceptance is as follows:

14:2:1 These were revolutionary and drastic proposals, but the moment I fully **accepted** them, the effect was electric.

47:3:1 That was great news to us, for we had assumed we could not make use of spiritual principles unless we **accepted** many things on faith which seemed difficult to believe.

48:2:5 Why this ready **acceptance**?

80:2:2 While drinking, he **accepted** a sum of money from a bitterly-hated business rival, giving him no receipt for it.

134:2:6 This may hang on for months, long after their mother has **accepted** dad's new way of living and thinking.

139:1:3 Without much ado, he **accepted** the principles and procedure that had helped us.

145:1:3 In fact, he may say almost anything if he has **accepted** our solution which, as you know, demands rigorous honesty.

From anonpress.org/faq

The unique ability of each AA to identify himself with, and bring recovery to the newcomer in no way depends upon his learning, his eloquence, or any special individual skills. The only thing that matters is that he is an alcoholic who has found a key to sobriety.

Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions, pp 150-151

AA's Newsletter for the Greater Tri-City Area

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Please Contact The Java Journal Editor With the Following Info:

- Birthday announcements: send your name, sobriety date and years sober;
- Events, announcements, fellowship information, Journal corrections;
- Your email if you would like to receive the Journal in your inbox once a month.

Ham On Wry *Reprinted with Permission from the October, 2006 Grapevine*

I DIALED THE NUMBER OF A NEWCOMER and got the following recording: "I am not available right now, but thank you for caring enough to call. I am making some changes in my life. Please leave a message after the beep. If I do not return your call, you are one of the changes."

Richard M.

Golden, Colorado

Calendar of Events



Washington State East Area 92 Quarterly 2008 ERC Building, 112 SW Basin Street, Ephrata, WA. Call Michael S at 942-4066 if you have any questions.	Jan 18—Jan 19
WACYPAA XI The Western Area Conference of Young People in AA. Doubletree Hotel Riverside at 2900 Chinden Blvd, Boise, Idaho. To register and for information go to www.wacypaa11.org or contact Casey (208)713-0302	Jan 18—Jan 20
3rd International Convention "There Is A Solution" Animation Centre, Kovalam JN., Trivandrum, Kerala, India. For information and registration flyer:: www.area92aa.org , go to "Fellowship Calendar of Events"	Feb 9— Feb10
44th International Women's Conference at the Oregon Convention Center in Portland, OR. Speakers, workshops, panels, etc. For more information: intlwomensconf.org	Feb 14—Feb 17
District 4 Central Office Meeting This monthly meeting includes all committee chairs for the District 4 area. Any/all AA members are welcome! If you're interested in getting involved (just a little or a lot) or need a service position, please come and check it out. 6:30pm, Alano Club (upstairs), Kennewick	Feb 19
13th Annual Thailand Roundup, Pattaya, Thailand. For information: www.aathailand.org	Feb 21—Feb 24
Yakima Valley Round-Up Yakima Convention Center. Speakers, entertainment, Al-Anon, etc. For more information: www.yakimavalleyroundup.com	Feb 22—Feb 24
33rd Annual Winter Holidays Conference "Courage to Change" Bellevue Hilton. Includes AA and Alanon Speakers, live entertainment, DJ hosted dances. For information and to register: www.psypc.org or call Smitty at (206)248-3952	Feb 22—Feb 24
Northwest Pocket of Enthusiasm, Spokane Valley Mirabeau Park Hotel, I-90 and Sullivan, Spokane Valley, WA. This event will include speakers, marathon AA and Alanon meetings every hour on the hour. More info to come... www.nwpockets.org	Mar 7—Mar 9
2008 Pacific Region AA Service Assembly (PRAASA) Anchorage, AK. The purpose of PRAASA is to develop greater unity among the members, groups, and areas of the Pacific Region. For information: www.praasa.org	Mar 7—Mar 9
Spring Pre-Conference Assembly Ellensburg, Quality Inn and Conference Center For information: www.area92aa.org/calendar	Apr 11—Apr 13
2008 Pacific Regional Forum, Hosted by Area 92. Double Tree Spokane Center, Spokane. More info to come... www.area.92aa.org	Aug 29—Aug 31