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Java Journal



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From The Archives

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Prime Dating Material?

Lame pick-up lines and help from the Fourth Step

When i got sober, one of the first things I heard in AA was that I had stopped maturing when I started drinking. If this was true, I was a fifteen-year-old in a thirty-seven-year-old body, and it meant that, along with the other difficulties of new sobriety, I had to experience being a teenager again--but this time without alcohol.

I started drinking in order to set myself at ease socially, first at high school dances, then at parties, then at bars and nightclubs, and finally at home, alone. I probably never had a relationship with a girl that didn't start and end with booze and drugs. Sober sex was not on my agenda.

I spent the next twenty-two years as a wannabe musician, paying my bills by way of illegal business ventures. I never dated--I either had toxic relationships or cruised the night spots like a predator, looking for the combination of the perfect high and that stunning, successful, articulate woman who was going to change my world. My standards inevitably got lower as the evening got closer to last call.

So, when I finally got to Alcoholics Anonymous, completely wrecked,

broke, scared, in trouble with the law, unemployable, and alone, I didn't have much faith in a shining future. The party was over, and I didn't have a clue how to live a regular life. I wound up living at my parents' house. I got a crummy job, a nice little \$200 newcomer's car, and I went to meetings. My teeth were bad and soon my clothes didn't fit--I carried thirty pounds of AA cookies and doughnuts around my waist. Boy, was I ever prime dating material!

At one year sober, I got involved in what I now (affectionately) call Big Book boot camp in a church in Ocean Park, California. We were on fire, sharing about doing the work, writing massive inventories, and learning to carry the message. Meanwhile, I had dabbled a bit in sober dating. I was shy, awkward, and not very interested in anyone who would have me.

Then it happened--I found her! I was delirious, totally in over my head, and ready to move in with her at the drop of a hat. After two dates and two weeks, she told me that she was back with her boy-friend. I was crushed. Didn't she know what she was missing? How could she have led me on this way? What did he have that I didn't have (besides a real job and a high-end sports car)?

Fortunately, people in AA consoled me and consistently redirected my attention to my primary purpose. They told me that romance would happen in God's time, not necessarily in my time. They told me that

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Augury

A sign of something coming. An indicator or omen.

The American Heritage®
Dictionary of the English
Language, Fourth Edition

Riddle

A question or statement requiring thought to answer or understand; a conundrum

The American Heritage®
Dictionary of the English
Language, Fourth Edition

From the Archives (continued)

(Continued from page 1)

I couldn't expect to be made whole by another person--that the Steps and a spiritual awakening would solve my problems. I listened to them and surrendered my desire to be in a relationship. I launched into Steps with renewed vigor and felt a new freedom, as I was no longer on the prowl when I went to meetings.

A few months went by. One night, I was at a local speaker meeting, minding my own business, enjoying the group with no other expectation than to be present for an evening of sobriety.

When the meeting ended, I joined the line to thank the speaker, as I had been taught. A woman I hadn't seen before was in line in front of me; she was tall, attractive, and well-dressed.

After she thanked the speaker, she hung around and we wound up introducing ourselves. I didn't plan this, but, after exchanging names, I found myself asking, "Do you work the Steps?" Now, there's a lame pick-up line if I ever heard one, but she cheerfully answered, "Yes."

We went for coffee soon after, then met at some other local meetings, and finally went on a date. I spent way more than I could afford, but we laughed and joked and had such a good time together that it was worth it.

Over the next few weeks, I had to compete with a few others who were interested in her (she was new in town). Once again, I experienced discomfort, but what she did was none of my business, so I kept my mouth shut. Meanwhile, I brought her to my Big Book meeting in Ocean Park

and she committed to re-taking the Steps at three years sober.

Thank God my sponsor in that group cared enough about me to make sure I didn't skip the sex inventory! After answering the questions in the middle of page sixty-nine (where had I been selfish and dishonest?, where was I at fault?, etc.), I asked myself, What should I have done instead? The answers were the opposite of what I had typically done: where I had been dishonest, tell the truth; where I had been selfish, be giving; where I had been inconsiderate, be thoughtful. From this, I was able to mold an ideal, as the book says. It was helpful to write it out in a couple of paragraphs--this provided me with a template for future conduct that I could always refer to (and ask for the power to live up to.)

I am grateful that the opportunity to contribute on this theme came up in the Grapevine. Whenever I speak in front of large groups, telling my AA story, I have been forced to stop each time I reach the part about meeting the woman in the line to thank the speaker. I become overwhelmed with gratitude. I have to wave my hands around and hold back tears until I am able to use my voice again. Its, nineteen years later; we are married and have two beautiful children who have never seen us drink or use abusive language toward each other.

I have been miraculously relieved of my old behaviors and attitudes regarding relationships with women, and have been truly blessed to have experienced the closeness, finally, that I had always searched for.

Dan H.

Oceanside, California

Monthly Laughs

THERE ARE ONLY TWO occasions when a drunk will say No in regard to alcohol. When asked if he's had enough. And if it's his turn to buy a round.

***Tom B.
Washington***

Traditions Checklist

These questions were originally published in the AA Grapevine in conjunction with a series on the Twelve Traditions that began in November 1969 and ran through September 1971. While they were originally intended primarily for individual use, many AA groups have since used them as a basis for wider discussion.

Tradition Four: Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or AA as a whole.

1. Do I insist that there are only a few *right* of doing things in AA?
2. Does my always consider the welfare of the rest of AA? Of nearby groups? Of Loners in Alaska? Of Internationalists miles from port? Of a group in Rome or El Salvador?
3. Do I put down other members' behavior when it is different from mine, or do I learn from it?
4. Do I always bear in mind that, to those outsiders who know I am in AA, I may to some extent represent our entire beloved Fellowship?
5. Am I willing to help a newcomer go to any lengths—his/her lengths, not mine—to stay sober?
6. Do I share my knowledge of AA tools with other members who may not have heard of them?

What do the Big Book authors mean when they say that,

“This is but a beginning, only the augury of a much larger future ahead?” (xv: 2)

Can I answer the riddle of why I took that one drink, that first drink, over and over?

Big Book

pgs. 22: 3, 22: 2, 23: 1

AA's Newsletter for the

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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.

Monthly Prayer

"This is a sick man. How can I be helpful to him?
 God save me from being angry. Thy will be done."
 (p. 67 BB)

Calendar of Events

<p>"Sunlight of the Spirit" 30th Inland Empire Roundup. Clarion Hotel Richland, WA. www.sunlightofthespiritroundup.com. This year's speakers: Madeline P (AA, Pocatello, Idaho), Karl M (AA, Covina, CA), Ellen C (AFG, Addison, TX), Otto M (AA, Plano, TX).</p>	<p>April 30–May 2</p>
<p>Silver Anniversary of the Touchet River Outdoor Roundup & World Famous Woody's Filipino Pig Roast. At the fairgrounds in Waitsburg. Register online at Snafubar.com/PigRoast link. For more information contact Larry (619)723-6390 or headpig@snafubar.com or Todd (KTW031584@hotmail.com)</p>	<p>May 28-30</p>
<p>2010 International Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous "A Vision For You" Alamodome, San Antonio, TX. AA members and guests from around the world will celebrate AAs 75th year. Big meetings held Friday night, Saturday night, and Sunday morning in the Alamodome. Other meetings, scheduled or informal, will take place throughout the weekend in the San Antonio Convention Center and local hotels. Go to http://aa.org for amore information.</p>	<p>Jul 1–Jul 4</p>