
District 41 Messenger

Spring – 2015

Addison – Bensenville – Elmhurst - Lombard – Oakbrook Terrace

Villa Park – Wood Dale



The Words We Use...GRACE

“Sober today through the Grace of God and the fellowship of AA.”

Regardless of how long we’ve been a part of the fellowship, hearing this simple phrase is assured at every meeting. A curious person may wonder what the word Grace might mean to a simple alcoholic. We are not saints or theologians, and some begin to scratch the annoying itch of “religiosity” at the very sound of a word often heard during our “church going” upbringing.

GRACE ...this five letter word has become a Truth of our program. For those of us who cannot fathom “why we were chosen” Grace is a word difficult to ignore.

So...perhaps we can read the words of spiritual teachers and philosophers to help cut this concept called Grace down to the bone...

GRACE ☐ A powerful force originating outside of human consciousness which nurtures the spiritual growth of human beings.

GRACE ☐ Resides in the unconscious mind. Our growth as human beings is being assisted by a force other than ourselves.

GRACE ☐ Grace empowers us to choose rightly in what seems to be the most choice-less of situations.

GRACE ☐ A force which pushes us to choose the more difficult path...an urge to grow. It empowers our willingness to take the risks of faith.

GRACE ☐ Grace is always good ...and it is always victorious.

GRACE ☐ A powerful force originating outside of human consciousness which nurtures the spiritual growth of human beings.

GRACE ☐ Grace enables Dignity...Grace enables Humility...Grace enables Receptivity. Grace empowers our growing trust and willingness to take the risks of Faith.

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District 41 Treasurer

PO Box 7226

Villa Park, IL 60181

District 41 Answering Service

PO Box 6365

Villa Park, IL 60181

Websites

Dist41@aa-nia.org

aa-nia.org/event

aa.org

Service Opportunities

District 41 General Service Representative (GSR) meetings are the place to find avenues for important service work.

If you are interested in any of these areas, D41 is in need of your time and talents.

The Archives

Cooperation with Professional Communities

The AA Grapevine

Literature

Public Information

Special Needs

We all get a second chance. It's called tomorrow.

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“Sober today through the Grace of God and the fellowship of AA.”

GRACE ☒ Grace is the dynamic outpouring of God’s loving nature which flows into creation and through creation in an endless self-offering of healing love, illumination, and reconciliation. It is a gift we are free to ignore, reject, ask for, or simply accept. And, it is a gift that is often given in spite of our intention and errors. At such times Grace is so clearly given unrequested, uninvited, even underserved, there can be no authentic response than gratitude and awe.

GRACE ☒ Grace itself cannot be possessed; it is eternally free, and like the spirit which gives it, it blows where it will. We can seek it and try to be open to it, but we cannot control it.

GRACE ☒ God is always trying to give good things to us, but our hands are too full to receive them. And not only our hands, but also our hearts, minds, and attention are charged with addictions. Our addictions fill up the spaces where Grace may flow.

GRACE ☒ God surprises us with undeserved, unexpected goodness and empowering us when all seems lost. When we try to pray and cannot, or when we failed in a sincere attempt to be compassionate, God, through Grace, touches us tenderly in return.

GRACE ☒ Living into the mystery of Grace requires encountering Grace as a real gift. Grace is not earned. It is not accomplished or achieved. It is not extracted through manipulation or seduction. Grace is just given. Because it is a pure gift, the most meaningful of our encounters with it will probably come at unintended times, when we are caught off guard.

GRACE ☒ Deserts of our lives may be large or small, chosen or forced, brief or prolonged. Yet all of them have similar terrain; they will all involve struggle with addiction. The transformation of desert into garden is made possible by God’s Grace raining upon the areas of our lives which are truly wastelands.

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Support Needed...

The oldest Open Meeting in DuPage County ,**The Elmhurst Open Group**, begun in 1963, is held at **8 pm every Tuesday at the Elmhurst Presbyterian Church, 367 Spring Road at St. Charles Road**. Entrance to the meeting is at the rear of the church through the kitchen area door. Each month a different group from D41 provides speakers.

The perfect Open Meeting for newcomers, professionals, and members of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Women speakers are needed and welcome.

Upcoming Events

March 27-29

2015 NIA Spring Assembly Conference

Pheasant Run Resort

St. Charles, IL

NIA Website for More Info and

Online Registration

April 18

Serenity House

30 Year Anniversary

Abbingdon Banquets

Rte. 53 & Butterfield Road

Glen Ellyn

All are welcome to this special Client/Alumni Luncheon to hear a message of the hope found in recovery.

Online registration at

www.serenityhouse.com

GSR Meeting

Third Thursday of Every Month, Anona East Rear Room at 7 pm.



A Deeper Look at the Way to ...

ACCEPTANCE

Release our claim on the "if onlys" and the "could have beens" and accept the finality of our loss.

We will give up our denial. We will stop blaming others. We will stop making excuses for our shortcomings.

We will stop pretending the past was something it wasn't and admit we lost what mattered to us. We will accept that our relationship with the person we lost is over and that it was exactly what it seemed to be ...no more, no less.

We will stop apologizing for ourselves and for the other person. We were the way we were. We will release our hurt and forgive.

We will forgive ourselves for not being better, wiser, more generous or understanding, for not caring, even for being negligent.

We will accept that we deserve to be forgiven just as we are now, in this place and as ourselves.

We will accept all of this and move on.

Accept that we are not perfect. Admit what we have lost mattered to us.

Take responsibility for the way our life has turned out. We were hurt, abandoned, injured, cheated, abused and betrayed. We were not loved the way we wanted to be loved or the way we needed to be loved.

We compromised, we gave in to the belief we were less. We held grudges, acted in anger, sought revenge, and in denying our hurt we allowed our anger to grow out of control and hurt others the very way we were hurt, the thing we promised ourselves we would never do.

We can never go back and relive the past. Accept that and move on.

Acceptance of ourselves allows us to finally put the world in loving perspective, to know what matters to us and to remind ourselves to take time to enjoy what we enjoy. **We can only find peace of mind when we accept all of ourselves and are willing to surrender to the truth of the moment.**

(Emotional Resilience...David Viscott, M.D.)

AA Grapevine

*The International Journal of
Alcoholics Anonymous*

Every month Grapevine offers up to 16 stories from AA members that are sure to inspire you on your journey. Grapevine writers come from all walks of life and every generation and geographic area. As a monthly publication, Grapevine is the only AA literature offering an ongoing picture of the current fellowship, through their struggles and their joy of living.

Like the personal stories heard in meetings, the stories cover a wide range of experiences – from problems solved, to emotional and spiritual healing. Many focus on “what it was like, what happened, and what we are like now.” Others focus on the Twelve Steps, the Traditions, and the tools of AA. Three subscription options are available:

Print...12 issues

Online...four additional stories per week, access to archives (from 1944), and audio recordings.

Grapevine Complete...12 issues print and online, 12 issues of audio recordings, six issues of “La Vina” online.

Visit **aagrapevine.org** for subscription information and more details on magazines, books, CDs, back issues, and other resources.

Bill Wilson said... “The thing about spirituality is those who think they have it, don’t.”

The inherent attractiveness of spirituality - when we experience it, we want to take part in it.

“If you want what we have...” What alcoholics have is a way of life which accepts imperfection as imperfection. This permits such spiritual qualities as “serenity” and “joy of living” to co-exist with such earthly realities as “defects” and “shortcomings”. What most hurting newcomers want when they first come to AA is not “sobriety” (the reality of which they cannot imagine), but “to be like that”.

We know spirituality is there (at gatherings) by its effects on others and we want to participate in it.

(“Spirituality of Imperfection” by Ernest Kurst)

Anonymity on the Web and Social Media Sites

Guarding Anonymity Online ...excerpt from the AA Guidelines (aa.org). For more on anonymity online see pamphlet "Understanding Anonymity" and the October 2010 issue of AA Grapevine on "Anonymity on the Internet."

The spirit of the Eleventh Tradition states in the Long Form that "our last names and pictures as AA members ought not be broadcast, filmed, or publicly printed."

Experience suggests that it is in keeping with the Eleventh Tradition NOT to disclose AA membership on social networking sites as well as on any website, blog, electronic bulletin board, etc. that is not composed solely of AA members and not password protected, or is accessible to the public.

Our experience suggests that some AA members do not post anything that is "AA Jargon" on the personal profiles and in "status updates," while others feel it is alright to do so as long as AA or Alcoholics Anonymous specifically is not mentioned.

As anonymity is the "spiritual foundation of all our Traditions" we practice anonymity on public websites at all times. **In simplest form, AAs do not identify themselves as AA members using their full names and/or full face photos.**

Unless password protected and for members only, a website is a public medium and, therefore, requires the same safeguards we use at the level of press, radio and film.

District 41 Messenger is published quarterly by District 41 of Alcoholics Anonymous. It is intended as a service letter to inform district members of service opportunities, events, and experiences relevant to carrying the AA message, in and through service.

Opinions expressed herein are those of the contributors and do not necessarily express or reflect the thinking of Alcoholics Anonymous, District 41, or the editor. This newsletter is a confidential document. Please do not take it to jails, treatment centers, etc. It is meant for use in the AA community.

Modern communication in AA is flowing from one alcoholic to another in ways that are high-tech, relatively open-ended and evolving quickly. Protecting anonymity is a major concern for members, who are accessing the Internet in ever-growing numbers.

When we use digital media, we are responsible for our own anonymity and that of others. **When we post, text, or blog, we should assume that we are publishing at the public level.** When we break our anonymity in these forums, we may inadvertently break the anonymity of others.

Even many Internet-savvy AA members say they do not want the ease of new technology to detract from the one-on-one sharing that has been so essential to our Fellowship and our recovery from alcoholism. It is helpful to remember that there is no need to let the speed of technology dictate the speed of our actions.



For comments, suggestions, contributionsplease contact the editor.

Mike60148@comcast.net