

# District 41 Messenger

## SPRING – 2018

Addison – Bensenville – Elmhurst - Lombard – Oakbrook Terrace

Villa Park – Wood Dale



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](http://dist41.aa-nia.org)

[aa-nia.org/event](http://aa-nia.org/event)

[aa.org](http://aa.org)

## ***The 12 Steps ...STEP ONE***

*Editor Note: Our next series will focus on the The Twelve Steps of our fellowship ...One Step at a Time. We start with the only step which demands 100% commitment.*

**“We admitted we were powerless over alcohol and our lives had become unmanageable”**

**Be all  
in or get  
all out.  
There is  
no halfway.**

▣ Our healing process begins in the first step. We acknowledge our problems and we openly ask god to heal us. The healing must begin on the inside. Putting the cork in the bottle is not enough. We need to rejuvenate our personalities, actively participate in a fundamental shift in perception. Alcohol is a part of the problem and we must accept responsibility for our problems before we can solve them.

*A Desire to Stop Drinking ...there is no other requirement than this excruciating mental act.*

▣ We must admit our lives are disturbed. We must accept we are helpless before the power of alcohol. We must accept the bitter fact we cannot drink like normal people. Look at ourselves naked in the mirror of the present. If we cannot drink safely, and if we cannot keep from drinking, then we are powerless over alcohol. Will power becomes non-existent when we trigger the allergy. We repeat the cycle over and over again. *We are powerless. We cannot drink safely because of the body. We cannot quit because of the mind. We are completely powerless.*

▣ Recovery can only begin with the decision to stay away from the first drink. No one can or will make that decision for us. The choice begins and always remains with the alcoholic. *To admit defeat is often thought of failure. For most of us, it opens the door to success.*

▣ We alcoholics don't drink to escape. We drink to overcome a craving beyond our mental control. We cannot start drinking without developing the phenomenon of craving. It's insanity to try and do something which we know we cannot. The first step is about Surrender...the surrender of telling the truth. *Sometimes we have to say I Can't Fix This.*

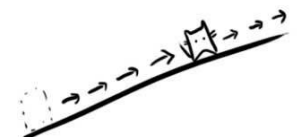
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**IT'S NOT ABOUT  
PERFECT. IT'S ABOUT  
EFFORT. AND WHEN YOU  
BRING THAT EFFORT  
EVERY SINGLE DAY,  
THAT'S WHERE  
TRANSFORMATION  
HAPPENS. THAT'S HOW  
CHANGE OCCURS.**

I STILL HAVE A LONG  
WAY TO GO



BUT I'M ALREADY SO FAR  
FROM WHERE I USED TO BE



AND I'M PROUD OF THAT.

***Step One is the Starting Point and We Start Over Every Day***

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▢ *Step One tells us we'd better stop and name the problem. We must be able to admit defeat before we rush in to fix things. We cannot recover from problems we won't own and acknowledge. Admitting our powerlessness over alcohol is the first step toward a solution.*

▢ When we admit we alone can do nothing without outside help, we are on the road to recovery. *The ability to take the first step is a gift of Grace because many die without every making it.* If we need to change something but decide just to accept it, then we are making it worse. We must accept responsibility and admit the truth of our lives.

▢ For an alcoholic, denial is a form of doubt. Many never become sober because they are not willing to accept the possibility there is a solution to the problem of alcoholic drinking. *Intellect cannot always grasp the Truth. "I don't know if I'm an alcoholic" is most often a prelude to drinking.* The first thing people do when they decide they aren't an alcoholic is go out and drink.

▢ A moment of clarity often leads us to AA and the first step. *It is perhaps a brief flash where we suddenly see the Truth. The light of awareness shines on our devastated lives.* Suddenly we are able to see clearly the fact of our suffering, and the suffering we have caused others. In the light of awareness we see our own difficulties and failures in life. We begin to understand true healing must begin on the inside.

▢ When our misery becomes overwhelming, and it becomes impossible to ignore any longer, we Surrender and cease fighting everything and everybody. *Surrender requires great mental and emotional energy and determination.* Our instincts reject the idea we are powerless over anything, or that we are not in control of things. We are powerless over the disease and effects of alcoholism. We see the pain of our lives and our stark limitations.

▢ *Step One states the membership requirement of Alcoholics Anonymous. We must admit our lives are disturbed. We must accept the bitter fact we cannot drink like normal people.* When we stop making excuses for our behavior we will have taken the first step toward achieving the humility we need in order to accept the spiritual guidance we need to rebuild ourselves and our lives.

▢ We cannot begin the work of releasing our alcoholism until we can acknowledge we are addicted. Until we realize we have an addiction, it is not possible to diminish its power. *We must acknowledge a part of us is out of control.* Recovery can only begin with the decision to stay away from the first drink. The choice begins and always remains with the alcoholic.

▢ Once an addiction has been acknowledged it cannot be ignored and it cannot be released without changing our life, without changing our self image, without changing our entire mental frame work. *The decision to continue drinking will cost us the things we most hold dear. The work to be done is ours, but the assistance of our fellowship is always there for us.* Our alcoholism is not stronger than us ...it is not stronger than who we want to be. Though it may feel that way, the disease can only win if we let it.

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## We are Alcoholic

Once an alcoholic always an alcoholic. No matter how long we can abstain, the Truth is Always the Truth. I am an alcoholic today, and tomorrow will be no different.

We can delude ourselves into believing we can drink because we alcoholics have an obsession about drinking. We can always convince ourselves we can drink safely. We lose the power to choose whether or not we can drink again.

Just before we drink we are cold stone sober. What makes us pick up that first drink again?

Just before we drink we can't remember the trouble – all we can remember is the ease and comfort.

**I DRANK MORE THAN  
I NEEDED  
MORE THAN  
I COULD STAND  
BUT *NEVER* GOT  
ALL I WANTED**

***Like Dominoes ...All of Our Energy Comes from Step One***

## OUR PRINCIPLES

Principles never change. Principles govern everything including human life. A principle is dependable because it is unchanging. If we have principles we don't need rules.

The Principles of this program enable us to go to any level we want. Sobriety is just the beginning. Some people use this program to keep from drinking. Others use it to start living.

We are presented a set of Principles, spiritual in nature, which if practiced, will expel the compulsion to drink. We only get results when we practice. God will make the rest possible.

We will always remain students in this program. We remain teachable and open to new opportunities, and we open our minds to accept, and our hearts to understand. Our Principles become a Design for Living which works. With the help of the fellowship we begin to put the scattered pieces of our lives back together in the proper order.

We must renew our commitment and energy every day, guided by our Principles of wisdom and compassion. Practicing our Principles NEVER ends. There is no END to the Twelve Steps. They repeat in different configurations and patterns as we continue to grow.

**OUR REWARD...HARMONY, HAPPINESS, CONTENTMENT.**

### *As Bill Sees It...*



When first challenged to admit defeat, most of us revolted. We had approached AA expecting to be taught self-confidence. Then we had been told that so far as alcohol was concerned, self-confidence was no good whatever; in fact it was a total liability. *There was no such thing as personal conquest of the alcoholic compulsion by the unaided will...our whole trouble had been the misuse of will power.* We had tried to bombard our problems with it instead of attempting to bring it into agreement with God's intention for us.

***Keep the Steps Alive in Our Lives***

## GSR Meetings

**Monthly GSR Meeting** is held on the third Thursday of every month at 7 pm in the Rear Room of the Anona East Club.

**Be  
grateful  
for another  
day. Not  
everybody  
made it,  
so don't  
take it for  
granted.**

ONE DAY IT JUST CLICKS...  
WE REALIZE WHAT'S  
IMPORTANT AND WHAT ISN'T.  
WE LEARN TO CARE LESS  
ABOUT WHAT OTHER PEOPLE  
THINK OF US AND MORE  
ABOUT WHAT WE THINK OF  
OURSELVES. WE REALIZE HOW  
FAR WE'VE COME AND WE  
REMEMBER WHEN WE  
THOUGHT THINGS WERE SUCH  
A MESS THEY'D NEVER  
RECOVER. AND THEN WE  
SMILE. WE SMILE BECAUSE WE  
ARE TRULY PROUD OF  
OURSELVES AND THE PERSON  
WE HAVE FOUGHT TO BECOME.



At the end of  
the day,  
**I am thankful**  
that my blessings  
are bigger than  
my problems.



## One of these principles by itself is of no value.

We are talking about a set of principles and they are ALL necessary. They interlock with each other. They are principles of success, principles of life. The steps rely on Sequence and Momentum. We commit ourselves to the whole process and take action.

## Drinking ....A Love Story

*[Excerpts from the book "Drinking, A Love Story" by Caroline Knapp]*

Yes, this is a love story. It's about passion, sensual pleasure, deep pulls, lust, fears, yearning hungers. It's about needs so strong they are crippling. It's about saying goodbye to something you can't fathom living without.

I love the way drink made me feel, I loved its special power of deflection, its ability to shift my focus way from my own awareness of self and onto something else, something less painful than my own feelings. I loved the sounds of the drink: the slide of a cork as it eased out of the bottle, the distinct glug-glug of booze pouring into a glass, the clatter of ice cubes in a tumbler. I loved the rituals, the camaraderie of drinking with others, the warming, melting feeling of ease and courage it gave me...the liquor would burn going down, and the burn would feel good; it would feel warm and protective; it would feel like insurance ...a measure of safety.

**YET.** Some people in AA say it stands for **You're Eligible Too.** I continued to drink but by that point I don't even think the alcohol worked anymore. Drinking was no longer fun. It had long ago ceased being fun. Pleasure just wasn't the point. Alcohol had become something I felt I needed in order to return to a sense of normalcy, in order to think straight. After one or two drinks I would feel I was back in my own skin, but the feeling would last only a half hour or so. Another few drinks and I would be gone again, headed for oblivion. **Maybe things would change if I quit drinking. Maybe drinking was, perhaps, the problem and not the solution.** Two months later I had my last drink.

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.

**Editor's Note:** The words of guidance in this newsletter are taken from years of scribbling in notebooks after listening to meeting comments and reading books. **I don't often remember exactly where comments come from, and every paragraph has a little from one place and a little from another to promote fluidity.** BUT, I can make a list of some references from my book shelf. **"Shift Happens"** by Robert Holden, Ph.D. **"Drop the Rock"** by Bill P. and Todd W. **"Carry this Message"** by Joe McQ. **"The Steps We Took"** by Joe McQ **"Understanding the 12 Steps"** by Terrence Gorski. **"Emotional Resilience"** by David Viscott, Ph.D. **"The Spirituality of Imperfection"** Kertz & Ketcham, **Joe & Charlie's Big Book Studies** and **The Twelve & Twelve and The Big Book.**

First we stayed sober because we have to, then we stay sober because we are willing to, finally we stay sober because we want to

The quieter you become the more you can hear.

readouts / idiazosa@tumblr.com

(Editor Note) Information on upcoming workshops, reports, contacts, and other information can be found on our D41 website. It is the responsibility of GSRs (Group Service Representatives) to provide flyers and information to their groups. If you do not have a GSR for your group please choose your representative so they may attend the monthly meetings on the Third Thursday of every month (except July).



Good, sober is.