

District 41 Messenger

WINTER – 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

aa-nia.org/event

aa.org

The 12 Steps ...STEP FOUR

Editor Note: This series is focusing on the The Twelve Steps of our Fellowship ...One Step at a Time. This month we explore Step Four.

“Made a Searching and Fearless Moral Inventory of Ourselves ”

Honest With Me

▣ Step Three will have little permanent effect unless at once followed by this strenuous effort which is Step Four. (BB) Every day we put off and procrastinate Step Four is a day that we are still filled with Resentments, Shame, Fear, Guilt and Remorse. Another day we do not feel good. And we don't know how many days we can go without our mind beginning to think about taking a drink.

(Joe & Charlie BB Study)

▣ INVENTORY = A LIST OF ITEMS ...Bill W. compares our personal lives to a commercial business. In our personal lives we have a business, too. Greatest business in the world for us. It's the business of finding a way to live where we can have a little peace of mind, serenity and happiness so we don't have to go back to drinking. If we don't inventory our personal business, chances are we are not going to find what's damaged and unsalable in our heads that's going to cause us to go broke. And going broke for us is simply going back to drink.

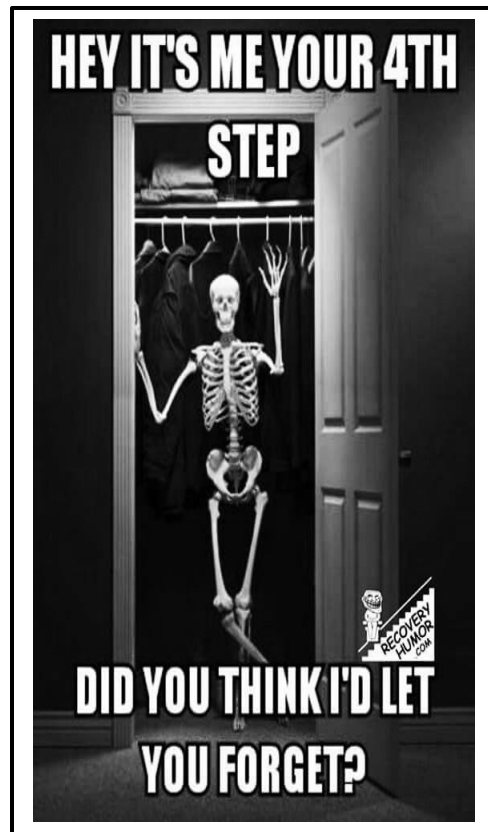
(J&C)

▣ We must find “flawed thinking processes” and get rid of them without regret. This is a Fact Finding ...Fact Facing process. We are going to go into our heads and heart looking for the Truth. A Moral Inventory is an Honest Inventory. We look at things as they really are, not how we pretend they are. We investigate our Resentments – Fears – Guilt – Remorse. If we want God to direct our thinking we must remove these damaged goods so God's thinking can enter and direct those portions of our minds where we had effectively blocked him out. Until we do our part and take stock honestly, God cannot do his part. *(J&C)*

▣ In our heads we have a little Resentment Replay Machine. Each time we play a resentment in our heads it makes the pain deeper. Our resentment comes back at us as a Self-Resentment which leads to Self-Pity. In our sickness we wear self-pity as a cloak of dignity. *(J&C)*

(Continued on next page)

The real miracle of AA is simply the willingness to act. The 12 steps are not rules. They are reports of actions taken.



A Vigorous Course of Action

(Continued from first page)

▣ Running through our dealings with every group of people in our lives, we found a poisonous stream of self-absorption, and unintended deafness to the needs, the hurts, and the actual reality of people other than ourselves. Our worlds began and ended at the tip of our nose. It was self-centered blindness to the needs of others, our own responsibilities, and our lives were filled with unintended neglect. Our relationships were handled with incompetence. We were either mad about something or someone, or we had done something for which we felt ashamed or remorseful. We have to discover where these thoughts and actions originated if we are to be free. The roots are the same ...Dishonesty, Lack of Consideration, Selfishness, Self Seeking and Fear.

▣ We look at the wrenching, awkward, agonizing sordid past, exploring all the ways we have caused others pain through our patterns of behavior. We must illuminate every twist of character and every dark cranny of our past. We Must ...without hiding anything. We don't add anything, nor do we take anything away. Our goal is to honestly see what was, and what is.

▣ Step Four begins the growth steps of our journey. It is the first evidence of our willingness to go on with the program. We finally get in touch with our shadow ..., that part of us which has been hidden away for so long. We acknowledge our transgressions and make the effort to do better in the future. Rather than judge ourselves, we accept what we discover and become willing to change. The past is only history. Step Four is concerned with our future. We must be done with shame, remorse and contempt for ourselves. With God's help we can discover a new self-respect, discarding faulty thinking which is no longer useful or appropriate.

▣ The written list is a necessity because our lives are complex and there are many parts to remember and look at closely. We look for Misdirected Instincts and Emotional Deformities. Resentment at ourselves and others is a major emotional problem. It leads to unhappiness and failure. We learn about ourselves and put the pieces of our lives back together in proper order. We learn through this process that we have become people who lost our direction in life and now we must drop the word Blame from our speech and accept responsibility for how are lives have turned out.

▣ We can only find peace of mind when we accept all of ourselves and are willing to surrender to the truth of the moment. If we are still too attached to our fears, our anger, our shame, then all we can see is ourselves. Life will go by while we sit in the corner whining about our lives. We must see ourselves and others and acknowledge our failings. We seek to Let Go and resolve our past actions so they won't continue to haunt us.

▣ A person motivated by self-will has been making wrong judgements which result in Resentments. We have been practicing wrong believing resulting in fear. And we have been taking wrong actions based on these fears and resentments. And this results in our doing harm to others.

Three important keys –

What I did – How it hurt others – How I was responsible for the result.

As we inventory our fears, we may discover they are a direct result of our inability to make decisions.

**SOME PEOPLE
CREATE THEIR OWN
STORMS, THEN GET
UPSET WHEN IT
RAINS.**

Your tanger

**Remember that the
reason you're doing
this is to make
your life better.**

@iHearts143Quotes ■ INSTAGRAM



***Everything I did in my life
was either intense
or non-existent.***



Resentment = Re-Feel

"Let's say we're going through life which we do on a daily basis, remembering always that everybody has got self-will. It's standard equipment. Maybe their social instinct is out of kilter, and they do something to me that threatens one of my basic instincts of life. Maybe they put me down in the eyes of other people and it threatens my self-esteem. Maybe they do something that threatens one of my personal relationships. Maybe they rip me off and steal my money from me. Maybe they do something to interfere with my sex life. Maybe they do something that threatens one of my ambitions for the future.

Now when they do that, it's wrong on their part, but that's not a resentment. It doesn't become a resentment until I go home in the evening and replay that thing in my mind, and I feel the pain the second time. The first time they did it to me hurt me, but when I go over it and replay it, and feel the pain the second time then I'm doing it to myself again. They did it to me the first time, but I'm doing it to me the second time. And after a while I'll replay it again and I'll feel the pain the third time.

And when I replay this thing, I change it just a little bit each time. I tend to make what they did to me just a little bit worse. I tend to make what I did just a little bit less. I tend to make the pain just a little bit deeper.

And if you let me play it over in my head enough times, after a while I can say to myself "I was just standing there doing nothing, and they came along and did it to me."

We like to get up in the morning, put on our cloak of self-pity, and we go out the door and say 'here we come mean old world. I know you're going to hurt me because you always do.' It is a sick way to think. *We think if the whole world is picking on us we must really be somebody special. My God we love this self-pity.*

Is there any way God can enter a mind filled with that crap? No way!

When our thinking is controlled and dominated by
Resentments, and all that go along with them,
God is absolutely blocked out."

(Joe & Charlie)



As Bill Sees It...

Self-searching is the means by which we bring new vision, action, and grace to bear upon the dark and negative side of our natures. With it comes the development of that kind of humility that allows it to be possible for us to receive God's help. Yet it is only a step. We will want to go further.

We will want the good that is in us all, even in the worst of us, to flower and to grow. But first of all we want sunlight. Nothing much can grow in the dark. Meditation is our step out into the sun.

A clear light seems to descend upon us all when we open our eyes. Since our blindness is caused by our own defects we must first deeply realize what they are.

**THE
DECEPTION
OF OTHERS
IS A
DECEPTION
OF
OURSELVES**

GSR Meetings

Monthly GSR Meeting is held on the third Thursday of every month (*except July*) at 7 pm in the Rear Room of Anona East

From Our Fellowship

**LOOK INSIDE AND
SEE WHAT'S THERE.
IS IT GOOD AND
IS IT FAIR?
OR DOES IT NEED
TO CHANGE.**

**BE BRAVE IN SEARCHING
HIGH AND LOW
IT MIGHT BE DEFECTS
THAT WE SOW
AND DO THEY NEED
TO CHANGE.**

**IT'S NOT SO HARD A
TASK TO DO
AND THEN YOU'LL FEEL
GOOD AS NEW
AND KNOW IT'S GOOD
TO CHANGE.**

(Karen F.)

**DONT BLAME
A CLOWN FOR
ACTING LIKE A
CLOWN, BLAME
YOURSELF FOR
GOING TO THE
CIRCUS.**

Take It Easy ...Do Not Struggle

Step Four ...An Opportunity

Accept ourselves, our mistakes, our selfishness and greediness, just as they are without explanation. We need to acknowledge our penchant for cruelty, even if is only toward ourselves. We recognize our dishonesty and our wish to avoid taking responsibility for hurting others, even if we did so in righteous retaliation for being hurt.

We begin a life-long study of ourselves, striving to Know and Understand what makes us tick. We accept we are human. We get back to the goodness we have hidden so long. We separate the past from the present. We have story, a past, but we are not the past. We place our lives back in balance, the good with the bad, pain with the pleasure. We make a commitment to the Truth without thought of turning back.

A Slap in the Face

Each memory is like a slap in the face. A rude awakening to another view of the world. I see my own suffering which triggered my actions. And every action has a reaction. Our very existence affects others.

When we see how our actions hurt others – and ourselves – we become a little more careful about what we are doing in the present.

We accept our failings and our transgressions so we may make the effort to do better in the future.

We still may do unskillful things, but we can take pleasure in our new skillful decisions.

WE SET OUR RESENTMENTS ON PAPER

The Write Way

"They came to me and said '*list your resentments*' and I said '*I don't have any.*' And they said '*surely you have one or two. Maybe you don't understand what a resentment is.*' And they explained it was to re-feel old pains and old hurts.

*And I said 'Yeah, I got a couple of those.' They said put them on paper and leave a little space between each one. So I got a sheet of paper and, leaving a little space between them, first thing I know I got about eight names on that sheet of paper. I reached over and got another sheet of paper and, after a while, I got another eight names. I got another sheet of paper and the next thing you know I had eight more listed and, over time, I ended up with about 152 names. I said to myself '*you're mad as hell about everything.*'*

And I didn't really know that until I saw everything on paper."

You can only see one Resentment at a time in your head.

(Joe & Charlie)

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 along with numerous on-line AA sites.*

"Serenity is what
we get when we
quit hoping for a
better past."

(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.