
District 41 Messenger

SPRING –2020

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The 12 Steps ...STEP 11

Editor Note: This series is focusing on the The Twelve Steps of our Fellowship ...One Step at a Time. This month we explore Step Eleven. We urge you to get out your Big Book and the 12 & 12 to read and comprehend what our founders have written in more detail.

**Step Eleven ...Sought through Prayer and Meditation
to Improve Our Conscious Contact with God as we Understood
Him, Praying Only for Knowledge of His Will for Us
and the Power to Carry that Out.**

▣ Much has already been said about receiving Strength, Inspiration, and Direction from Him who has all knowledge and power. If we have carefully followed directions so far, we have begun to sense the flow of His Spirit into our lives. To some extent we have become God-Conscious. We have begun to develop A Vital Sixth Sense. But we must go further and that means more action. (BB85)

▣ We have within ourselves all the knowledge and power we could ever need to handle any situation which comes to us. This Sixth Sense of Direction, is far above our physical senses of hearing, touch, taste, sight, and smell.

▣ Our Morning Prayer ...On awakening let us think about the 24 hours ahead. We consider our plans for the day. Before we begin, we ask God to direct our thinking, especially asking to be divorced from self-pity, dishonest or self-seeking motives. In thinking about our day we may face indecision. We may not be able to determine which course of action to take and here we ask God for inspiration, an intuitive thought, or a decision. We relax and take it easy. We do not struggle. (BB86)

▣ We saw this Higher Power was worth knowing better. Our search for a higher power takes place in our thinking... our own personal method of communicating with and working with the God of our understanding.

**We realize God's Will for Us is to stay sober and help
other alcoholics achieve sobriety. Each of us has
things only we can do, and a place only we can fill due
to our unique talents and experience.**

(Continued on next page)

**THE
OPPOSITE OF
ADDICTION IS
CONNECTION.**

**I WAS DRINKING AT
A BAR SO I TOOK
BUS HOME.**

**THAT MAY NOT SEEM LIKE A
BIG DEAL TO YOU, BUT I'VE
NEVER DRIVEN A BUS
BEFORE.**

Conscious Contact = Awareness

(Continued from first page)

▣ Practicing Step Eleven is our privilege and our own business. It's not subject to the dictated interpretation of some bigot, nor to someone else's mandate. The Big Book was written to guide us. By its own statement, its contents are meant to be suggestive only. It should not be the vehicle that drives us away from AA, our church, our Bible, or Almighty God. Our practice is based on OUR understanding of a Higher Power, "Love and Tolerance" is our code according to Bill. "Love and Service" was a phrase used during Dr. Bob's last AA talk. Both expressions can form the basic mindset of our prayers and meditation.

▣ We cannot read about pioneer AAs without realizing what the drunks ...long despairing, lonely, selfish, frightened, and confused were expecting. They didn't just want to be dry. They didn't want to just be "sober" (whatever that meant). They did not want to be perpetual members of a sick society. What they really wanted was a new life, a design for living, and a Purpose which conformed to God's will, not their own. Our pioneers were seeking the elusive "something" ... a sense of connection to something greater than themselves.

▣ Surrender as much of ourselves as we know, to as much of God as we know. We will then begin to experience new levels of spirituality which will answer all of our doubts and questions. If we fail to build this foundation we put our recovery at risk. When the inevitable storms of life strike and knock us for a loop, we are far more likely to seek the illusory relief of drinking instead of turning to the spiritual connection we have been building.

▣ In meditation we are not really human beings striving to have a spiritual experience. We are, rather, spiritual beings who are having a human experience. Meditation is the only means of getting to know this truth about ourselves, to experience it in the very core of our being. Meditation can fundamentally change our outlook toward the world and our place in it. It may help us shed old behaviors and attitudes so we may become whom God wants us to be.

▣ A Beginner's Guide to Meditation ...all electronics turned off ...Sit Down and Shut Up. Let thoughts come and go as they please. Listen to your heart.

▣ There is a direct linkage among self-examination, meditation and prayer. Taken separately, these practices can bring much relief and benefit. But when they are logically related and interwoven, the result is an unshakable foundation for life. We become serious about grounding our new lives on a solid spiritual base. We will free ourselves from bondage to the self-seeking anger, fear, isolation, and despair which once ruled us and fueled our destructive drinking adventures.

As we go through the day we pause, when agitated or doubtful, and ask for the right thought or action. We constantly remind ourselves we are no longer running the show, humbly saying to ourselves many times each day "Thy Will Be Done." We are then in much less danger of excitement, fear, anger, worry, self-pity, or foolish decisions. We become much more efficient. We do not tire so easily, for we are not burning up energy foolishly as we did when we were trying to arrange life to suit ourselves. (BB87)

Our prayers may be awkward. Our attempts may be feeble. But since the power of prayer is in the One who hears it and not in the one who says it, our prayers do make a difference.

God uses broken people like you and me, to rescue broken people like you and me.

WHEN WE SAY A PRAYER, WE ALLOW OUR CONSCIOUSNESS TO RECEIVE INTUITIVE GUIDANCE.

"THERE'S NOTHING MORE POWERFUL THAN PAYING ATTENTION"

*Bill W. on Step Eleven when he was
24 years sober ...and still searching.*

"When it comes to the practice of Step Eleven, I must confess I am still very much in the beginner's class. I'm almost a case of arrested development. Around me I see many people who make a far better job of relating themselves to God than I do. Certainly it musn't be said I haven't made any progress at all over the years; I simply confess I haven't made the progress I might have made.

"This little confession of my own 'pilgrims progress' is offered to illustrate where I, and maybe lots of other AAs, have still been missing something of top importance. Through lack of disciplined attention, and the right kind of faith, many of us keep ourselves year after year in a rather easy spiritual kindergarten. Our lack of growth is often revealed when we find ourselves still bored and miserable, despite our efforts to maintain the principles of the Twelve Steps over years of time.

"Our friends may tell us how well we are doing, but inside we know better. We still can't seem to handle life as it appears to us. We begin to think, as I did, there might be a serious flaw in our practice. The other steps might keep us sober and somehow functioning, but if we can expend even five percent more time and effort on Step Eleven the results can be wonderfully far-reaching. This is almost a uniform experience of those who constantly improve their conscious contact with God as they understand him.

"Those we have persisted almost surely find more serenity, more tolerance, less fear, and less anger in their lives. They acquire a quiet courage, the kind which is not a strain. They look at so-called failure and success as simple facts of life. Problems and calamity begin to mean 'instruction' instead of 'destruction'. They feel free and sane. A sense of purpose and direction increases, while tensions and anxieties commence to fade. Wonderful and unaccountable things start to happen as the practice of Step Eleven grows stronger.

"A great theologian once declared 'the chief critics of prayer are those who have never really tried it enough.' That is good advice I'm trying to take more seriously for myself. Many AAs have long been striving for a better conscious contact with God and I trust many more of us will presently join such wise company."

(Article published in The Grapevine, June 1958. Edited for space.)



As Bill Sees It...

*Simplify
Our
Prayers*

In AA we have found the actual good results of prayer are beyond question. They are matters of knowledge and experience. All those who persisted have found strength not ordinarily their own.

They have found wisdom beyond the usual capability. And they have increasingly found a peace of mind which can stand firm in the face of difficult circumstances.

GSR Meetings

Monthly GSR Meeting is held on the
third Thursday of every month
at 7 pm in

Elmhurst Presbyterian Church
367 Spring Rd at St. Charles Rd



SAFE HARBORS

Sunshine Group

8 pm Monday

Good Samaritan Church
960 W. Army Trail Rd.
Addison

More Will Be Revealed

Interactive Big Book Study

7 pm Monday

Anona East
125 S. Villa Ave.
Villa Park

Stove Toucher's

Big Book/Step Study

8:35 pm Monday

Elmhurst Presbyterian Church
367 Spring Rd.
Elmhurst

Mohawk Group

Discussion of AA Topics

8 pm Thursday

Faith Community United
Church of Christ
192 S. Center St.
Bensenville
(Enter North Side Door, down
the stairs, turn right)

**Sometimes you
just need to
take a deep
breath.**

The Back Page

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
And where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
To be consoled, as to console;
To be understood as to understand;
To be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive;
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
And it is in dying to self we are born to eternal life.

(Peace Prayer of St. Francis ...the 11th Step Prayer)

Ninth Annual DuPage County Open held on Feb.22, 2020 *Event Summary By Maggie A. (Chair)*

Some 700+ happy and sober members of AA, and their friends, filled every open space and chair at Parkview Community Church. Every participating District (40,41,42,43) and their volunteers were ready with sobriety gift tables, lots of water, soda, snacks, and, of course, the ever present gallons of coffee.

Robert S. acted as Master of Ceremonies to guide us through traditional readings, introductions, and the always anticipated Sobriety Countdown from 50 years to One Day. Our three speakers were impressive and thought provoking as they shared their Experience. Strength and Hope to those attending.

There is an important challenge for the future of our DuPage Open. Going forward we will require a bigger space and during a quick hands-up vote, it was agreed a nominal ticket purchase would be acceptable to allow us to spread our wings in a larger venue. Our great need is to find a space which will hold a minimum of 750 people, available parking, a sound system, and a way to brew coffee. We need everyone on board with possible ideas and suggestions for a gathering place with a little more elbow room.

We are grateful to Parkview Church for such extraordinary efforts to ensure our past gatherings were safe and comfortable. And, of course, we are thankful for our "above and beyond" volunteers who made "this thing of ours" work once again with a minimum of hiccups.

We hope to see you again next year, wherever we set up camp.

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 & Charles Big Book Studies and The Twelve & Twelve and The Big Book along with numerous on-line AA sites.*

District 41

Our AA Hotline Needs You to Be of Service

When an alcoholic calls
The Hotline seeking relief
from their alcoholism we are
responsible for reaching out our
hand to help them find a new life
of peace and sobriety.

Callers may need:

- To find a meeting
- Need directions where to go and what to do
- The gift of Hope another alcoholic may offer.

Volunteers are expected to be

- Sober and Sponsored
- Able to be patient, understanding and helpful.
- A Lifeline for someone alone in their disease.

12th Step calls are not a requirement for volunteers but the opportunity may arise on occasion.

No Office Hours are required ... calls come to your mobile phone when you are open to take calls.

VOLUNTEER

Email your name and phone number to
41aahotline@gmail.com
or call 630-544-1576

(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.



Good, sober is.