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Osseo AA Newsletter

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“One Day at a Time”



Happy Valentines Day



Greetings Everyone:

Is this year starting off fast! It is already almost time for the 1 year honoree banquet!

Remember, we wanted to know all the 1 year honoree's by the time this newsletter hits the stands!

Paul along with Rebecca has done a standup job on getting this information for us. I hope that everyone has purchased their tickets already. If not, we still have plenty of tickets left. I know that Squad 8 has some extra tickets if needed. We need a firm count of how many people are attending by at least 1 week before the banquet, in order to have enough meals prepared. Paul had arranged for a speaker and it should be a good time for everybody.

We are keeping an eye our fuel usage, so that we do not run out again! This can be frustrating for all of us. Jim had set the thermostat for the setting that are recommended during the day and at night.

I look forward to seeing all of you at the banquet on the 16th of February.

Regards,

Bob W.

If anyone would like to get on the mailing list for this newsletter, please just submit your name and email address to any board member or Bob G. Email addresses can be found on the club website:

OsseoAA.org

Inside this issue:

<i>From the Board President</i>	1
<i>Step Two</i>	2
<i>Tradition Two</i>	6
<i>Big Book Study Guide Submitted by Gregg B.</i>	8
<i>Alanon/Alateen Affirma- tions By: Noah Bagwell</i>	9
<i>Aluminum Can Drive</i>	11

Want to Contribute?

- Contact Bob G. or any Board Member with stories or suggestions
- Check the website often as it's constantly changing. It's also a good way to keep up with the news. If you have club news, please send it in.
- Edited by: Julee E.

Step 2 – Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

From "Barefoot" Bill L.

The chapter "We Agnostics", which begins on page 44, starts with a good review of Step 1:

"In the preceding chapters you have learned something of alcoholism. We hope we have made clear the distinction between the alcoholic and the non-alcoholic. If, when you honestly want to, you find you cannot quit entirely, or if when drinking, you have little control over the amount you take, you are probably alcoholic. If that be the case, you may be suffering from an illness which only a spiritual experience will conquer." Let me repeat that last part: "If that be the case, you may be suffering from an illness which ONLY a spiritual experience will conquer."

Now we know what we have to do in order to recover from alcoholism. We must undergo a life changing, spiritual transformation.

We realize this is not the answer many of you expected to find in Alcoholics Anonymous. But, please keep in mind that alcoholism IS a fatal, progressive illness. Prior to A.A., most alcoholics either died drunk or were locked up in jails or insane asylums.

In the middle of page 44, the authors once again tell us our options:

"To one who feels he is an atheist or agnostic such an experience seems impossible, but to continue as he is means disaster, especially if he is an alcoholic of the hopeless variety. To be doomed to an alcoholic death or to live on a spiritual basis are not always easy alternatives to face."

So again, they are giving the only two alternatives you have if you are an alcoholic - either a lot of booze or a lot of God.

Not only is a spiritual experience possible, it is a guarantee, provided you keep an open mind and take the Steps as described in the "Big Book".

It continues to tell us in the next paragraph on page 44, that no matter what our present beliefs are, there IS hope for us. The book continues:

"But it isn't so difficult. About half our original fellowship were of exactly that type. At first some of us tried to avoid the issue, hoping against hope we were not true alcoholics. But after a while we had to face the fact that we MUST find a spiritual basis of life - OR ELSE. Perhaps it is going to be that way

with you. But cheer up, something like half of us thought we were atheists or agnostics. Our experience shows that you need not be disconcerted (which means troubled)."

We find it amazing that the newcomer can start the A.A. program without any specific beliefs or, for that matter, without any beliefs whatsoever. All a person needs is the open-mindedness and the willingness to believe that WE BELIEVE this program works.

And let us assure you, WE DO believe. The Twelve Steps have changed our lives and the lives of millions of other alcoholics. This program WILL change your life too, IF you honestly want to recover from this deadly affliction AND are willing to go to any lengths.

Now that we have admitted we are alcoholics and that we can never safely drink alcohol, let's look at what we have to do in order to recover. At the bottom of page 44, we learn:

"If a mere code of morals or a better philosophy of life were sufficient to overcome alcoholism, many of us would have recovered long ago. But we found that such codes and philosophies did not save us, no matter how hard we tried. We could wish to be moral, we could wish to be philosophically comforted, in fact, we could wish these things with all our might, but the needed power wasn't there. Our human resources, as marshaled (or directed) by the will, were NOT sufficient; they failed utterly."

So that last line is saying that our human resources (which is the ONLY thing that we have going for us), as directed by our self-will, has not worked in the past, is not enough, and will continue to fail us when it comes to combating our alcoholism.

The book continues:

"Lack of power, THAT was our dilemma. We HAD to find a power by which we could live, and it HAD to be a POWER GREATER THAN OURSELVES. Obviously. But where and how were we to find this Power?"

Well, that's EXACTLY what this book is about. Its MAIN OBJECT is to enable you to find a Power greater than yourself which WILL solve your problem. (Notice that it does NOT say that this Power is going to help US solve our problem, but that this POWER GREATER THAN OURSELVES will solve our problem. The book continues.) That means we

have written a book which we believe to be spiritual as well as moral. And it means, of course, that we are going to talk about God."

Please turn to page 570 in the Third Edition Big Book, or to page 568 in the Fourth Edition. This is the Spiritual Experience Appendix in the back of the book. What is it going to take for us to find this Higher Power? The answer is mentioned in Appendix II. In paragraph 3 on page 570 in the Third Edition or 568 in the Fourth Edition, we find:

"Most emphatically we wish to say that any alcoholic capable of honestly facing his problems in the light of our experience CAN recover, provided (or if) he does not close his mind to all spiritual concepts. He can ONLY be defeated by an attitude of intolerance or belligerent denial."

"We find that NO ONE need have difficulty with the spirituality of the program. Willingness, honesty and open-mindedness are the ESSENTIALS of recovery. But these are INDISPENSABLE."

The "Big Book" authors tell us it is our arrogance and our shortsightedness that keeps us in the darkness and block us from the "sunlight of the Spirit," which is the ONLY thing that can help us.

Please turn back to page 46. The Big Book authors ask us to develop OUR OWN concept of God. In other words, they want us to find a God of OUR OWN understanding. In the second paragraph on page 46 it says the following:

"Much to our relief, we discovered we did not need to consider ANOTHER'S conception of God. OUR OWN conception, however inadequate, was sufficient to make the approach and to effect a contact with Him. As soon as we admitted the possible existence of a Creative Intelligence, a Spirit of the Universe underlying the totality of things, we began to be possessed of a new sense of power and direction, PROVIDED (or IF) we took other simple steps. We found that God does NOT make too hard terms with those who seek Him. To us, the Realm of Spirit is broad, roomy, ALL inclusive; NEVER exclusive or forbidding to those who EARNESTLY seek. It is open, we believe, to all..."

They inform us that we are going to take some actions which WILL lead us to our Creator, and this Higher Power WILL guide us in the Realm of the Spirit. Our personalities will change from self-centered to God-centered; our lives will change from

the material to the Spiritual.

As we said earlier, A.A. is not a religious program. We're free to call this Power anything we wish, as long as WE are not it and it's a Power GREATER than ourselves. The "Big Book" authors use many different names for this Power including Creative Intelligence, Universal Mind, Spirit of the Universe, Creator, the Great Reality, and an unsuspected inner resource, among others. Quite a few times they call this Power, "God", but they use the word God merely for convenience rather than for any religious purpose. Please refer to this Power by any name you believe in or feel comfortable with.

Bill Wilson, our New York City co-founder, had a great deal of difficulty accepting this spiritual solution to alcoholism. In "Bill's Story" he describes how he "came to believe".

In late November 1934, Ebby T. visits Bill at his Brooklyn, New York home. It is during this visit that Bill first learns about a God of his own understanding. Let's pick up the story at the top of page 12.

As we mentioned earlier, Ebby is one of Bill's high school friends and a former drinking companion. Ebby has been sober in the Oxford Group for several months. He tells Bill his life has changed as the result of practicing the Oxford Group's Six Spiritual Activities that we discussed earlier. Please keep in mind that Bill always considered Ebby to be a worse drunk than he was, so the fact that Ebby was now not drinking carried a strong message.

Bill becomes quite distressed when Ebby starts talking about God. However, he DOES listen because he realizes Ebby's life has changed and Ebby is sober for the first time in many years. Page 12, paragraph 1:

"Despite the living example of my friend there remained in me vestiges (or traces) of my old prejudice. The word God still aroused a certain antipathy (which means a strong dislike). When the thought was expressed that there might be a God personal to me this feeling was intensified. I didn't like the idea. I could go for such conceptions as Creative Intelligence, Universal Mind or Spirit of Nature but I resisted the thought of a Czar of the Heavens, however loving His sway might be. I have since talked with scores of men who felt that same way."

Then, Ebby presents Bill with a revolutionary concept: "My friend suggested what then seemed a nov-

el (or new) idea. He said, "Why don't you choose YOUR OWN conception of God?"

"That statement hit me hard. It melted the icy intellectual mountain in whose shadow I had lived and shivered many years. I stood in the sunlight at last."

"It was only a matter of being WILLING to believe in a Power greater than myself. Nothing more was required of me to make my beginning. I saw that growth could start from that point. Upon a foundation of COMPLETE willingness I might build what I saw in my friend. Would I have it? Of course I would!"

This is how Bill started on his journey to a God of his understanding and lasting sobriety. It all began with Bill's willingness to believe in a God of his own understanding.

Now, let's look at how the "Big Book" authors describe God. In the middle of page 46, they ask us to set aside our contempt for spiritual principles and consider OUR OWN concept of God. If we do, we will begin to realize there just might be some validity to the A.A. spiritual solution for alcoholism. Starting with line three in the first paragraph of page 46, they write:

"...We found that as soon as we were able to lay aside prejudice and express even a willingness to believe in a Power greater than ourselves, we commence to get results, even though it was impossible for any of us to fully define or comprehend that Power, which is God."

Basically, the "Big Book" authors tell us it is impossible to define God. We have to stop trying to comprehend God with our mind and start accepting God with our heart. The book continues at the top of page 47:

"When, therefore, we speak to you of God, we mean YOUR OWN conception of God. This applies, too, to other spiritual expressions which you find in this book. Do not let any prejudice you may have against spiritual terms deter (or prevent) you from honestly asking yourself what they mean to you. At the start, this was all we needed to commence spiritual growth, to effect our first conscious relation with God as we understood Him. Afterward, we found ourselves accepting many things which then seemed entirely out of reach. That was growth, but if we wished to grow we had to begin somewhere. So, we used OUR OWN conception, however limited it was."

On the next page, the "Big Book" authors state that most of us eventually become "teachable". Sometimes we have to take our lives right to the brink of disaster and look death squarely in the eye before we are willing to acknowledge the presence of a Higher Power. But there is hope even for the most stubborn of us. Starting with the seventh line down from the top of page 48, it says:

"...Faced with alcoholic destruction, we soon become as open minded on spiritual matters as we had tried to be on other questions. In this respect alcohol was a great persuader. It finally beat us into a state of reasonableness. Sometimes this was a tedious process; we hope no one else will be prejudiced for as long as some of us were."

In the third paragraph on page 52, the authors make a powerful case for the existence of God. Page 52, paragraph 3: "When we saw others solve their problems by a simple reliance upon the Spirit of the Universe, we had to stop doubting the power of God. Our ideas did not work. But the God idea did."

So, in order to recover from alcoholism, we have to find a Power greater than ourselves. But where are we going to find this Power? Please turn to page 55, and starting with the second paragraph, the authors provide us with the answer to that question. On page 55, paragraph 2, it says:

"Actually we were fooling ourselves, for deep down in EVERY man, woman, and child, is the fundamental idea of God. It may be obscured (or made unclear) by calamity, by pomp, by worship of other things, but in some form or other it is there. For faith in a Power greater than ourselves, and miraculous demonstrations of the power in human lives, are facts as old as man himself."

We saw that faith in some kind of God was a part of our make-up, just as much as the feeling we have for a friend. Sometimes we had to search fearlessly, but He WAS there. He was as much a fact as we were. We found the Great Reality deep down within us. In the last analysis it is only there that He may be found. It was so with us.

We can only clear the ground a bit. If our testimony helps sweep away prejudice, enables you to think honestly, encourages you to search diligently within yourself, then, if you wish, you can join us on the Broad Highway. With THIS attitude you CANNOT fail. The consciousness of your belief is SURE to

come to you."

These are dramatic, and for some of us, revolutionary concepts. Let us summarize them for you. First, the authors of the "Big Book" tell us they have found a way to free us from the bondage of alcoholism. Next, they describe the solution as a Power greater than ourselves. Finally, they tell us where to find this Power - right inside each and every one of us.

Now we know WHERE to find this Power. Most of the rest of the "Big Book" is devoted to the question of HOW to find this Power.

Once again we need to make a decision. We have to decide whether or not we believe in a Higher Power - a Spirit of the Universe - a God of OUR understanding.

Just like Step One, the Big Book on page 47 provides a question associated with taking Step Two. In the middle of 47, the Big Book authors write:

"We need to ask ourselves but one short question. 'Do I NOW believe, or am I even WILLING to believe, that there IS a Power greater than myself?' As soon as a man can say that he does believe, or is willing to believe, we emphatically (or strongly) assure him that he is on his way. It has been repeatedly proven among us that upon this simple cornerstone a wonderfully effective spiritual structure can be built."

Now, it's time to choose. Are we willing to admit that there is a Higher Power? If we are, we're ready to take Step Two.

If you are hesitant to commit right now, that's fine. It just means you're not ready to proceed with the rest of the program. Please take time during the next week to discuss the concept of a "God of YOUR understanding" with your "sponsor" or spiritual advisor. If after that you are then ready to proceed, have that person take you through the Second Step and ask you to answer the Second Step question found in the middle of page 47, where we find the directions.

Let's see who is ready to proceed.

This is the Second Step question for those doing it for the first time: "Do you NOW believe, or are you even WILLING to believe, that there IS a Power greater than yourself?"

Please answer yes or no.

For those of you who have done a Second Step in the past, there is a deeper Step Two question to answer: Do you now believe, or are you even willing to believe, that there is a Power greater than yourself that can take you beyond where you are now in EVERY area of your life. Past here, past the experience you've already had. Do you believe that there are realms of peace, love, freedom, happiness, understanding, areas of consciousness, wisdom, & power that you can't even imagine?

Please answer yes or no.

Those of you who have answered "yes" to the Step 2 question have completed the Second Step.

When I hear somebody sigh "Life is hard," I am always tempted to ask, compared to what?

--Sydney J. Harris

We've probably heard all the negative quotations about life. There was also probably a time when we believed them all. Based on the state of our lives at the time, it was probably no surprise that life was difficult and brutal.

Certainly there are many things in life that are harsh and cruel; we see such things in the paper every day. But there are some very wonderful things, too. It's just that we've been conditioned to believe the horrors instead of the wonders.

Today may have been a long, tiring, boring day. But that doesn't mean all days are long, tiring, and boring. There's much good in life that we can see if we let ourselves. We can get off our life-is-difficult soap-box and hear the humor, see the smiles, and feel the caring. Life may be difficult at times, but it is also quite fulfilling.

Tradition Two—For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.

WHERE does A.A. get its direction? Who runs it? This too, is a puzzler for every friend and newcomer. When told that our society has no president having authority to govern it, no treasurer who can compel the payment of any dues, no board of directors who can cast an erring member into outer darkness, when indeed no A.A. can give another a directive and enforce obedience, our friends gasp and exclaim, "This simply can't be. There must be an angle somewhere." These practical folk then read Tradition Two, and learn that the sole authority in A.A. is a loving God as he may express Himself in the group conscience. They dubiously ask an experienced A.A. member if this really works. The member, sane to all appearances, immediately answers, "Yes! It definitely does." The friends mutter that this looks vague, nebulous, pretty naive to them. Then they commence to watch us with speculative eyes, pick up a fragment of A.A. history, and soon have the solid facts. What are these facts of A.A. life which brought us to this apparently impractical principle? John Doe, a good A.A., moves -- let us say -- to Middletown, U.S.A.

What are these facts of A.A. life which brought us to this apparently impractical principle?

John Doe, a good A.A., moves -- let us say -- to Middletown, U.S.A. Alone now, he reflects that he may not be able to stay sober, or even alive, unless he passes on to other alcoholics what was so freely given him. He feels a spiritual and ethical compulsion, because hundreds may be suffering within reach of his help. Then, too, he misses his home group. He needs other alcoholics as much as they need him. He visits preachers, doctors, editors, policemen, and bartenders . . . with the result that Middletown now has a group, and he is the founder.

Being the founder, he is at first the boss. Who else could be? Very soon, though, his assumed authority to run everything begins to be shared with the first alcoholics he has helped. At this moment, the benign dictator becomes the chairman of a committee composed of his friends. These are the growing group's hierarchy of service --self-appointed, of course, because there is no other way. In a matter of months, A.A. booms in Middletown.

The founder and his friends channel spirituality to newcomers, hire halls, make hospital arrangements, and entreat their wives to brew gallons of coffee. Being on the human side, the founder and his friends may bask a little in glory. They say to one another, "Perhaps it would be a good idea if we continue to keep a firm hand on A.A. in this town. After all, we are experienced. Besides, look at all the good we've done these drunks. They should be grateful!" True, founders and their friends are

sometimes wiser and more humble than this. But more often at this stage they are not.

Growing pains now beset the group. Panhandlers panhandle. Lonely hearts pine. Problems descend like an avalanche. Still more important, murmurs are heard in the body politic, which swell into a loud cry: "Do these oldtimers think they can run this group forever? Let's have an election!" The founder and his friends are hurt and depressed. They rush from crisis to crises and from member to member, pleading; but it's no use, the revolution is on. The group conscience is about to take over.

Now comes the election. If the founder and his fiends have served well, they may --to their surprise --be reinstated for a time. If, however, they have heavily resisted the rising tide of democracy, they may be summarily beached. In either case, the group now has a so-called rotating committee, very sharply limited in its authority. In no sense whatever can its members govern or direct the group. They are servants. Theirs is the sometimes thankless privilege of doing the group's chores. Headed by the chairman, they look after public relations and arrange meetings. Their treasurer, strictly accountable, takes money from the hat that is passed, banks it, pays the rent and other bills, and makes a regular report at business meetings. The secretary sees that literature is on the table, looks after the phone-answering service, answers the mail, and sends out notices of meetings. Such are the simple services that enable the group to function. The committee gives no spiritual advice, judges no one's conduct, issues no orders. Every one of them may be promptly eliminated at the next election if they try this. And so they make the belated discovery that they are really servants, not senators. These are universal experiences. Thus throughout A.A. does the group conscience decree the terms upon which its leaders shall serve.

This brings us straight to the question does A A. have a real leadership?" Most emphatically the answer is "Yes, notwithstanding the apparent lack of it." Let's turn again to the deposed founder and his friends. What becomes of them? As their grief and anxiety wear away, a subtle change begins. Ultimately, they divide into two classes known in A A. slang as "elder statesmen" and "bleeding deacons." The elder statesman is the one who sees the wisdom of the group's decision, who holds no resentment over his reduced status, whose judgment, fortified by considerable experience, is sound, and who is willing to sit quietly on the sidelines patiently awaiting developments. The bleeding deacon is one who is just as surely convinced that the group cannot get along without him, who constantly connives for reelection to office, and who continues to be consumed with self pity. A few hemorrhage so badly that -- drained of all A.A. spirit and principle -- they get drunk. At times the A.A. landscape seems to be littered with bleeding forms. Nearly every oldtimer in our Society has gone through this process in some degree. Happily, most of them survive and live to

become elder statesmen. They become the real and permanent leadership of A.A. Theirs is the quiet opinion, the sure knowledge and humble example that resolve a crisis. When sorely perplexed, the group inevitably turns to them for advice. They become the voice of the group conscience; in fact, these are the true voice of Alcoholics Anonymous. They do not drive by mandate; they lead by example. This is the experience which has led us to the conclusion that our group conscience, well-advised by its elders, will be in the long run wiser than any single leader.

When A.A. was only three years old, an event occurred demonstrating this principle. One of the first members of A.A., entirely contrary to his own desires, was obliged to conform to group opinion. Here is the story in his words.

"One day I was doing a Twelfth Step job at a hospital in New York. The proprietor, Charlie, summoned me to his office. 'Bill,' he said, 'I think it's a shame that you are financially so hard up. All around you these drunks are getting well and making money. But you're giving this work full time, and you're broke. It isn't fair.' Charlie fished in his desk and came up with an old financial statement. Handing it to me, he continued, 'This shows the kind of money the hospital used to make back in the 1920's. Thousands of dollars a month. It should be doing just as well now, and it would --if only you'd help me. So why don't you move your work in here? I'll give you an office, a decent drawing account, and a very healthy slice of the profits. Three years ago, when my head doctor, Silkworth, began to tell me of the idea of helping drunks by spirituality, I thought it was crackpot stuff, but I've changed my mind. Some day this bunch of ex-drunks of yours will fill Madison Square Garden, and I don't see why you should starve meanwhile. What I propose is perfectly ethical. You can become a lay therapist, and more successful than anybody in the business.'

"I was bowled over. There were a few twinges of conscience until I saw how really ethical Charlie's proposal was. There was nothing wrong whatever with becoming a lay therapist. I thought of Lois coming home exhausted from the department store each day, only to cook supper for a houseful of drunks who weren't paying board. I thought of the large sum of money still owing my Wall Street creditors. I thought of a few of my alcoholic friends, who were making as much money as ever. Why shouldn't I do as well as they?

"Although I asked Charlie for a little time to consider it, my own mind was about made up. Racing back to Brooklyn on the subway, I had a seeming flash of divine guidance. It was only a single sentence, but most convincing. In fact, it came right out of the Bible -- a voice kept saying to me, 'The laborer is worthy of his hire.' Arriving home, I found Lois cooking as usual, while three drunks looked hungrily on from the kitchen door. I drew her aside and told the glorious news. She looked interested:

but not as excited as I thought she should be.

"It was meeting night. Although none of the alcoholics we boarded seemed to get sober, some others had. With their wives they crowded into our downstairs parlor. At once I burst into the story of my opportunity. Never shall I forget their impassive faces, and the steady gaze they focused upon me. With waning enthusiasm, my tale trailed off to the end. There was a long silence.

"Almost timidly, one of my friends began to speak. 'We know how hard up you are, Bill. It bothers us a lot. We've often wondered what we might do about it. But I think I speak for everyone here when I say that what you now propose bothers us an awful lot more.' The speaker's voice grew more confident. 'Don't you realize,' he went on, 'that you can never become a professional? As generous as Charlie has been to us, don't you see that we can't tie this thing up with his hospital or any other? You tell us that Charlie's proposal is ethical. Sure, it's ethical, but what we've got won't run on ethics only; it has to be better. Sure, Charlie's idea is good, but it isn't good enough. This is a matter of life and death, Bill, and nothing but the best will do!' Challengingly, my friends looked at me as their spokesman continued. 'Bill, haven't you often said right here in this meeting that sometimes the good is the enemy of the best? Well, this is a plain case of it. You can't do this thing to us!'

"So spoke the group conscience. The group was right and I was wrong; the voice on the subway was not the voice of God. Here was the true voice, welling up out of my friends. I listened, and -- thank God -- I obeyed."

One forgives to the degree that one loves.

--La Rochefaucould

We all get hurt by other people sometimes. When this happens, we have choices. We can get angry and stay that way. We can act like it didn't hurt and try to forget it. We can act like a sad sack and hold a grudge. Or we can forgive.

We first have to think about how someone hurt us. It often helps to talk to the person, to tell the person that he or she hurt us. We then tell the person what we'd like from him or her to help set our relationship straight. Then we let go.

This is what forgiveness is: (1) loving ourselves enough to stand up for ourselves, (2) loving others enough to point out their behavior, and (3) letting go.

I found this on line and use it a lot to guide myself and other to certain topics in the big book. It's kind of a map that might be helpful to others.
Gregg B.

Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book Guide - Topics in the Big Book and Suggested Topics for A.A. Meetings

Big Book Guide - Topics in the Big Book and Suggested Topics for A.A. Meetings

Whether you're looking for a topic for your next A.A. meeting, or you would simply enjoy checking out a few topics in the Big Book, here is a Little Big Book Guide to Topics in the Big Book.

All references to the topics will be found in the first 164 pages of the book, Alcoholics Anonymous

ACCEPTANCE page 14

ANGER page 64, 66, 111

COMPASSION page 108

DISEASE 21, 23

EASY DOES IT page 135

FEAR pages 67, 68, 115, 116

FREEDOM page 62,

HONESTY pages 58, 115

HUMILITY pages 12, 13,63, 73

INVENTORY pages 64-71

INSANITY pages 24, 37, 38, 57

JEALOUSY pages 82, 119, 131

MEDITATION pages 86-88

PATIENCE pages 67, 82, 90, 111, 118, 123, 125, 127

PRAYER pages 63, 67, 70, 75, 76, 79, 80, 82-87

RESENTMENT pages 64-66, 117-119

RECOVERY pages 1-164

SELF-WILL pages 60-62

SELF KNOWLEDGE pages 7, 36-39

SERENITY page 68

SEX 68-70, 124, 134

SLIPS pages 35, 120, 139

SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE pages 25, 27, 44, 47, 128, 130, 157

STEPS pages 59-60

WILLINGNESS pages 12-14, 26, 28, 46, 47, 53, 57, 58, 60, 69, 70, 76, 79, 93, 118, 124, 152, 153, 158, 159, 162

I hope the above references help.

Humility is our acceptance of ourselves.

--Anonymous

It is strange how we can go to school and learn a lot of facts, but never learn much along the way about ourselves. We can take up nursing, teaching, counseling, and giving ourselves to the needs of others, while never having our own needs met.

Why does it seem as if it is easier to solve the problems of the world than to solve our own problems? We simply don't know ourselves very well. When we look into a mirror and attempt to understand ourselves, our conclusions about what we see are usually very different from what a friend sees. When we finally take the time and make ourselves a priority, we make a startling discovery. There exists within us at all times a Higher Power that is the builder of all successes and our comforter during times of trial.

I understand myself only in relation to my Higher Power. The image I see and the identity I have is then one of humility before that Power. Humility is my acceptance of myself.

Al-Anon/Alateen Affirmations

This is a first hand account of a young man's trials and tribulations. This young man was instrumental in getting the Alateen program going at Suburban North. It's published exactly how it was written. Please keep him in your prayers. He's one of my most favorite young men and he (like all of us) can use all the help that it's possible to receive.

I started getting headaches in the middle of the night, so I went to my doctor and he told me that it would be best if I go get an MRI. He said it was probably nothing, but still thought it was best if I went to get an MRI. So, I went to get my MRI and when I went in there I was pretty excited, but once I got out of the MRI, I was walking down the hallway and was excited to get home. A doctor stopped me and said they saw something on the MRI. They brought me back to the computer and showed me that they thought they found something, and he said it was a tumor and it was on my brain-stem, and was causing hydrocephalous. He said that I needed to go to the hospital right away. We left the clinic and we started to head down to Children's Hospital in Minneapolis. I remember sitting in the front seat, I looked over at my mom and she looked worried. She was calling our family to let them know what happened. When we got to the hospital, we went into the ER. I called my friend and he came to the hospital with me and I was moved up to a different room (the intensive care unit). His mom went out and bought me a Juicy Lucy and I ate that and fell asleep to a movie.

The rest is a dazed blur to me. I remember being in a room with a very cool nurse. I don't remember much off the "top of my head" □ I do remember having 3 brain surgeries. I remember being poked in the finger all the time and when I got home they were scabbed up because of it. I also felt like they were starving me while I was there. The only thing I remember eating was a disgusting microwavable burrito. I remember laying in bed and

they had to put these arm restraints on me to keep my arms locked to the bed so that I wouldn't scratch my head. That is all I remember from the hospital.

After I got out of the hospital my teacher came to my house to help me with homework, she tutored me. My friends also came over to support me.

Then recently, I went to my friends house to have a sleepover and when I woke up my temples hurt really bad. But then the next day I felt better and went to my Aunts house. When I woke up there, my head hurt so incredibly bad. They kept asking me if I wanted to go in. Finally because it hurt so bad, I said yes, I did want to go in. Then they drove me to the hospital. I don't remember anything in the ER. My mom tells me I had an MRI and X-Rays done and my hydrocephalous was back. That's water on the brain. When I got up to the intensive care unit, I saw a nurse that I had the first time I was in the hospital 2 years earlier.

The next day I was brought down for surgery. I saw a guy again from 2 years ago that I recognized. I remember them giving me medication that made me fall asleep. Then I remember waking up with pain in my head on the incision. They gave me medication over and over again. Then I was brought up to my room where my recovery began.

The day I left I remember packing up my stuff and then I got a text message from one of my friends at church that said they were praying for me. Then I was taken down in a wheelchair to the entrance of the hospital where my Aunt Jill picked me up. My mom ordered me food from Matt's and again, I was able to have a Juicy Lucy.

What I want to say is that I really loved the AA club that my mom still goes to. The people there have given her so much support and have prayed a lot for me. Before any of this happened I was active up at the club and

I had a lot of friends and a lot of fun. I went to round-ups with my mom and they had Alateen there that I went to. I liked Alateen so much that I started, well I helped to start the Alateen that is at the club now. The problem is I don't have a lot of memory of the people that I used to be friends with. I look at them, and I know I should know them, but I can't. There are a few people that I do remember. I remember Bob G. he's like an uncle to me. I also remember Karen she is my mom's sponsor. At first, I didn't remember her, but then my memories started to come back. I remember Jackie, my mom's first sponsor, but she went to a different AA club and has moved up north. That place means a lot to me and I know I had many good times there. My mom helps remind me of the Christmas Parties and Thanksgiving Dinners. It is hard for me to go back there because I don't remember and I wish I could. I have a feeling, but I just can't describe it. I am very happy that all of my mom's AA "family" has been there for her, I am even more thankful that I have gotten so many prayers from people there, people I can't remember, but remember me. I know that the prayers help. I guess the sad thing is that everyone remembers me, but I don't remember them. But the great part is that they continue to support me. I want to say thank you to everyone up there for everything that you have done for our family.

Noah Bagwell

Progress, Not Perfection.

--Alcoholics Anonymous slogan

We don't expect our lives to be perfect.
We don't expect ourselves to be perfect.
We just want to stop the insanity of addiction and begin to live lives that make

sense.

We don't expect to be perfect, but most of us do want to be good. We can actually live up to that goal now that we are sober. It takes a lot of work, and always seeing new ways to improve. Working the Steps helps us learn a great deal about how we can be better people. Having the love and support of our recovery friends and the guidance of our sponsor gives us the strength and help we need.

In fact, the work of being a good person brings many rewards. We invite spiritual teachers into our lives, we make true friends, we gain respect for ourselves, and we find that others respect us too.

Prayer for the Day

Higher Power, help me see today how I can pitch in to make things better in some way at work, at home, or for someone who needs a bit of kindness.

Today's Action

What's one small thing I am willing to do in the next twenty-four hours to bring a bit of goodness to a situation? Call a friend who needs support? Bring flowers to work to brighten the day? Take time to really visit with a child? I will make a decision to do one special thing and do it!



PLEASE BRING ALL OF YOUR ALUMINUM CANS TO THE CLUB!!!

We'll even take BEER cans!!!

If we all participate in a can drive, it will fund our annual picnic. If you can, please bring cans (preferably crushed) to the club and throw them in the trailer on the side of the building.

No plastic bottles please

Not your brand of soda?
Let me know. I'll change
the picture!

