

Sheets of Sobriety - December 2014

Volume 1 - Edition 7

~Spreading the message one paper at a time~

The opinions and viewpoints expressed in these Sheets of Sobriety are not necessarily those of AA as a whole, or Indianapolis Intergroup. They are the expression of the individuals submitting content to our editor for publication to our fellowship. Please send any comments, feedback or contributions to be published to briacocon@gmail.com. We welcome your thoughts and thank you for your service!



The Holidays - The Language of Letting Go - 12/25

Sometimes, the holidays are filled with the joy we associate with that time of year. The season flows. Magic is in the air. Sometimes, the holidays can be difficult and lonely. Here are some ideas I've learned through personal experience and practice, to help us get through difficult holidays. Deal with feelings, but try not to dwell unduly on them. Put the holidays in perspective:

A holiday is one day out of 365. We can get through any 24 - hour period.

Get through the day, but be aware that there may be a post-holiday backlash. Sometimes, if we use our survival behaviours to get through the day, the feelings will catch up to us the next day. Deal with them too. Get back on track as quickly as possible. Find and cherish the love that's available, even if it's not exactly what we want. Is there someone we can give love to and receive love from? Recovering friends? Is there a family who would enjoy sharing their holiday with us? Don't be a martyr - go. There may be those who would appreciate our offer to share our day with them. We are not in the minority if we find ourselves experiencing a less than ideal holiday. How easy, but untrue, to tell ourselves the rest of the world is experiencing the perfect holiday, and we're alone in conflict. We can create our own holiday agenda. Buy yourself a present. Find someone to whom you can give. Unleash your loving, nurturing self, and give in to the holiday spirit. Maybe past holidays haven't been terrific. Maybe, this year wasn't terrific. But next year can be better, and the next a little better. Work toward a better life - one that meets your needs. Before long, you'll have it.

“God, help me enjoy and cherish this holiday. If my situation is less than ideal, help me take what's good and let go of the rest.” - Pg. 1

The Gifts of Sobriety

By: Anonymous



When I think about what the program has given me, the gifts of sobriety, my mind tends to want to go to a gratitude list, to run through the list of items and the measurable things that I seem to have acquired or rediscovered since getting sober. I suppose you can say that this list is comprised of these gifts as well. Our lists obviously will be similar and different depending on your bottom, your time in recovery and your perception of these realities and more.

I remember how excited I was to find that I still enjoyed fishing, even sober. Music was still wonderful. My appreciation for nature was not only still in place, but it had grown. Camping and hiking rock! Sure it was great to have a home, a job, a vehicle with valid plates and a valid drivers license, but these things I had to some degree or another back in the days of blur.

No, the things I look at today as gifts of sobriety are different in part from my gratitude list because they are less like a frisbee, which is fun and enjoyable at times and with certain people, but something more like a good pair of jeans. You know, like how when you first get them there is a degree of expectation and yet at the same time a little bit of anxiety. You put them on at home for the first time and while they fit, they are tight in areas you don't want them to be and they look...well like a pair of brand new jeans. After time, they get dirty. They get worn, and there may be a small tear here and there but they become that pair of jeans. The ones you reach for because they are the pair that you feel comfortable in. At first you grow to like how they look on you, and then you really fall in love with how they fit. They find the washer less often, because they are on you so much. Silly as it may seem, this analogy works for me, and I will show you why.

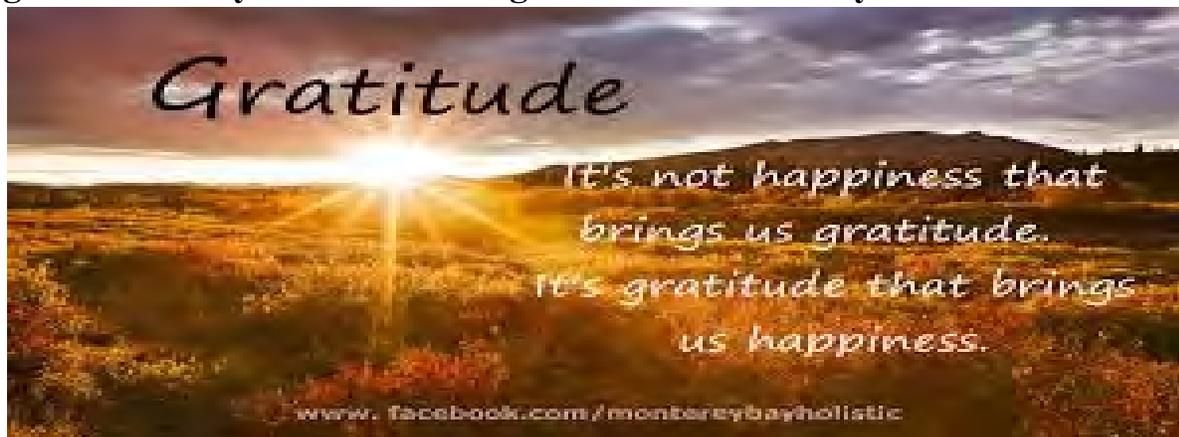
Remember what it was like looking at yourself in the mirror back in the days of blur. Remember how you took an inventory of all that you saw, good at first and later, more bad than good. Then in recovery things started to change. You - started to change. It started with a smile, and maybe a haircut or a shave. It wasn't to long, and the inventory was filling more with

“God, help me enjoy and cherish this holiday. If my situation is less than ideal, help me take what’s good and let go of the rest.” - Pg. 2

the good than with the bad, seemingly without being even aware of it. This is one of those gifts.

For me the list goes on and on. The more I think about it, the more aware I am of the abundance of blessings this program has allowed God to pour out onto me, some simple and funny, like knowing where my keys, my wallet, my shoes, and my car are, knowing who it is lying next to me in the morning, and not feeling like I need to run out the door, figuring out how to make it to work on time, and oddly enough keeping my job!

Others, the more valuable ones to me, are more serious. My marriage works. We are genuinely in love with each other. Sure we have our moments, but after all we are both alcoholics and of the opposite sex. What would you expect? My kids have never seen me intoxicated. Ever. I pay my bills on time and don't buy things I don't need because it seemed like a great idea at the time. I have food in my fridge, turns out its meant for more than just holding booze! I have a roof over my head that doesn't leak, and keeps me warm at night. I have shoes on my feet and a shirt on my back. All this and more. These easily fit into the gratitude list I was talking about earlier, but they are also gifts. Given and received by a wretch who truly did not deserve them. Yet the greatest gift I have received in sobriety is the relationship with God I have grown into through working the steps one day at a time. Page 53 tells it like it is when it says "When we became alcoholics, crushed by a self-imposed crisis we could not postpone or evade, we had to fearlessly face the proposition that either God is everything or else He is nothing." Through this relationship with God, through working the steps of AA, the promises have come true. Everything else is contingent on this fact. Every gift I have received since stepping into the program of AA is due to this truth. They still come. I do not deserve them, but I receive them with gratitude and I in turn give them away with that same gratitude. It works if you work it.



“God, help me enjoy and cherish this holiday. If my situation is less than ideal, help me take what’s good and let go of the rest.” - Pg. 3

Step of the Month:

Step Twelve-



Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Practical experience shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics. It works when other activities fail. This is our twelfth suggestion: Carry this message to other alcoholics! You can help when no one else can. You can secure their confidence when others fail. Remember they are very ill. Life will take on new meaning. To watch people recover, to see them help others, to watch loneliness vanish, to see a fellowship grow up about you, to have a host of friends - this is an experience you must not miss. We know you will not want to miss it. Frequent contact with newcomers and with each other is the bright spot of our lives. - A.A. Big Book p.89 - More about Step 12 in the Big Book

The joy of living is the theme of A.A.'s Twelfth Step, and action is its key word. Here we turn outward toward our fellow alcoholics who are still in distress. Here we experience the kind of giving that asks no rewards. Here we begin to practice all Twelve Steps of the program in our daily lives so that we and those about us may find emotional sobriety. When the Twelfth Step is seen in all its full implication, it is really talking about the kind of love that has no price tag on it. - *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, p. 106

Helping others is a significant part of the program, and there are many ways the program gets passed on. When you live the program and share it with others, you are carrying the message, especially when you sponsor new members. In practicing the Twelfth Step you will find that -

- By witnessing to others, your appreciation of the program and the program's impact on your life deepens.
- By hearing the stories of new members, you are reminded of where you were when you started.
- By modeling to others, you become aware that you need to practice what you preach.
- By giving to others, you develop bonds with new people who really need you
- By helping others, you give what you have received.
- By supporting new beginnings, you revitalize your own efforts.

- *A Gentle Path Through the Twelve Steps*, by Patrick Carnes, p. 197

“God, help me enjoy and cherish this holiday. If my situation is less than ideal, help me take what’s good and let go of the rest.” - Pg. 4

A Most Important Piece of Paper



The afternoon of December 11th, 1934, at the age of 39, Bill Wilson staggered up the steps and through the doors of Charles R. Towns Hospital, 293 Central Park West, NY, NY for the last time as an inebriated drunk, waving his last bottle of beer at Dr. "Silky" Silkworth as he was met in the hall. He had been there two times previously to dry out. Bill was admitted at 2:10pm, and so began the history of Alcoholics Anonymous in Sobriety. From that moment Bill never took another drink of alcohol. That beginning is recorded for all time on this piece of paper.

A handwritten hospital record form from Charles R. Towns Hospital. The form is filled out with cursive handwriting. At the top, it says "CHARLES R. TOWNS HOSPITAL, 293 Central Park West, New York 17, N. Y.". The patient's name is "W. G. Wilson". The address is "112 Clinton St. B'klyn N. Y.". The date of admission is "12-11-34" and the date of discharge is "12-18-34". The form also includes fields for "ADMITTED BY", "DISCHARGED BY", "PHYSICIAN", "NURSE", "DAYS IN HOSPITAL", and "DAYS IN QUARTERS". There are some additional notes and numbers written on the form, such as "page 65 Volume 21" and "11-4-3220".

Towns Hospital Record of Admission and Discharge of Wm. G. Wilson

It also records for posterity the time frame of Bill's spiritual awakening that began the process of Bill recognizing the importance of carrying the message of sobriety to other drunks in order to stay sober himself. Ebby Thatcher, an old drinking buddy, now sober, had visited Bill in his kitchen in November 1934, had explained the Oxford Group teachings to Bill, who was drinking at the time, and planted the seed that would grow into Alcoholics Anonymous. What Ebby conveyed to Bill is the basis of what we know today as the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. "I learned that I had to admit I was licked; I learned that I ought to take stock of myself and confess my defects to another person in confidence; I learned that I needed to make restitution for the harm I had done others. I

“God, help me enjoy and cherish this holiday. If my situation is less than ideal, help me take what’s good and let go of the rest.” - Pg. 5

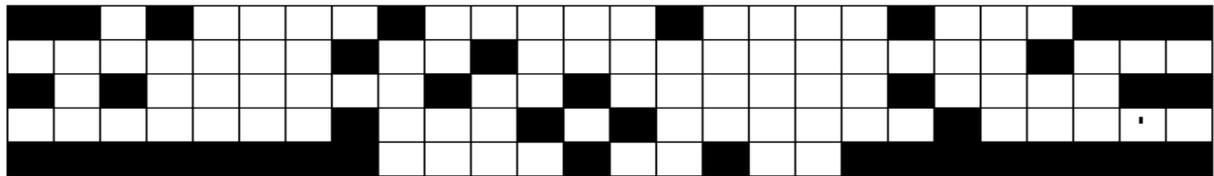
was told I ought to practice the kind of giving that has no price tag on it, the giving of myself to somebody. Now, I know you are going to gag on this, but they taught me to pray to whatever God I thought there was for the power to carry out these simple precepts. And if I did not believe there was any God, then I had better try the experiment of praying to whatever God there *might* be. And you know, Bill, it's a queer thing, but even before I had done all this, just as soon as I decided that I would try with an open mind, it seemed to me that my drinking problem was lifted right out of me." - *AA Comes of Age*, 58-59. And now, a few weeks later, Bill found himself once again in the hospital for alcoholism, totally inebriated and helpless, suffering through the barbiturate and belladonna "purge and puke" treatment of that day for drying out a drunk. He had been in bed a short while when he heard the doctor talking to Lois by the door, saying that if her husband came out of this episode and did drink again, he did not honestly believe he would live six months. When he heard these words he was immediately carried back to his talk with his friend Ebby and could not dismiss the idea that although Ebby might be batty with religion, he was sober and he was happy. He kept turning this over in his mind, in a mild delirium, and came to a vague conclusion that maybe Ebby did have something in a man's helping others in order to get away from his own obsessions and problems. On his second day at Towns, Ebby, still sober, visited Bill, once again laying out what he had previously told Bill, then left. Struggling with his helplessness and his ego, sinking into a deep depression of incomprehensible demoralization, Bill finally surrendered the evening of the 14th, and the Spiritual Experience occurred, freeing not only Bill from the grips of Alcoholism, but countless millions of us down through the years to the present day. The following day, Ebby brought Bill a copy of William James' *Varieties of Religious Experience* and Bill devoured it, discovering the answer to, and significance of, his Spiritual Experience. *Complete hopelessness, deflation at depth, and total surrender to a Power that none of us understand, and then it happens! The result of One Alcoholic talking to Another! The carrying of the 12th Step Message! That without each other, without continued surrender to our Higher Power, without continued practice of the Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous, we are doomed to insanity, incarceration and death! There is no reprieve through our own will power! Bill was released the morning of the 18th of December, immediately associated himself with the Oxford Groups, immediately began the practice of the steps and working with other alcoholics, a practice that continued for his lifetime, until his death January 24, 1971. He carried the message to my prime sponsors, Tex R., Cliff W., Chuck C., in the process, so that I too would hear the message and would recover from the alcoholic's seemingly hopeless state of mind and body. So many times since then recovered alcoholics have repeated this message to newcomers: "The power and ways are given to us to be passed on to others. To think or do anything else is pure selfishness. We only keep them and get more by giving them away, and if we do not give them away, we lose them. What I have done, you can do too . . . if you live as I have lived in sobriety and do as I have done, applying the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous to my life in all my affairs." Yes, that is a most important piece of paper, for from it, nearly 40 years later, began my life in sobriety, February 28, 1974. A wonderful sober life of 14870 One Days At A Time 'til today. I am most grateful. - Love and Peace, Barefoot*

“God, help me enjoy and cherish this holiday. If my situation is less than ideal, help me take what’s good and let go of the rest.” - Pg. 6



November Falling Phrases: 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.

November Cryptoquip: Once more The alcoholic at certain times has no effective mental defense against the first drink. Except in a few rare cases neither he nor any other human being can provide such a defense. His defense must come from a Higher Power.



H A
 H A S Y F O M B C E B E T H
 R O C E S V W H A T I S R G A N R T I E W
 P N I R I N L E W A O D I T O T I L S Y W G O N T
 K I O W E A G L O F N U N D E O V E L I N D T H H O



***Gary B* - 50 Years**

***Patricia A.* *Brian V.* *David A.* - 41 Years**

***Marie D.* - 27 Years**

***Grace G.* - 25 Years**

***Ursula M.* - 19 Years**

***Greg C.* - 14 Years**

***Nonie V.* - 13 Years**

***Kevin S.* - 10 Years**

“God, help me enjoy and cherish this holiday. If my situation is less than ideal, help me take what’s good and let go of the rest.” - Pg. 7

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
										C	A		R			L									

V W Q J K Z R A K I R Y K C V K J K I W Q I
 R M R O M
 W Q L M I V A K F Q L K H R I O P F I A K Q H V H E
 L R O M
 C K F F F P N N K L V H E Q H M I W Q I F R A K I W
 O O M R
 V H E E R R M A V E W I I P L H P G Q I
 M O M
 Q H T A R A K H I I W Q I F Q Y V E Z W Q H E K
 O R O M O O O M
 N R L F R A K R H K B W R P F K M I R Z R A K
 O M O R L
 I R V H I W K A R L H V H E N K K C V H E
 O O R O
 F K H I K H Z K M I R Q H R I W K L M Q T R N
 L O
 C V N K B W K H V B Q U K P G I R M Q T
 R R L O O O L
 I W K L K Q L K C R I F R N G R F F V Y V C V I V K
 R L O
 F V Z Q H W Q L M C T B Q V I I R F K K
 O O
 B W Q I F E R V H E I R W Q G G K H H K X I



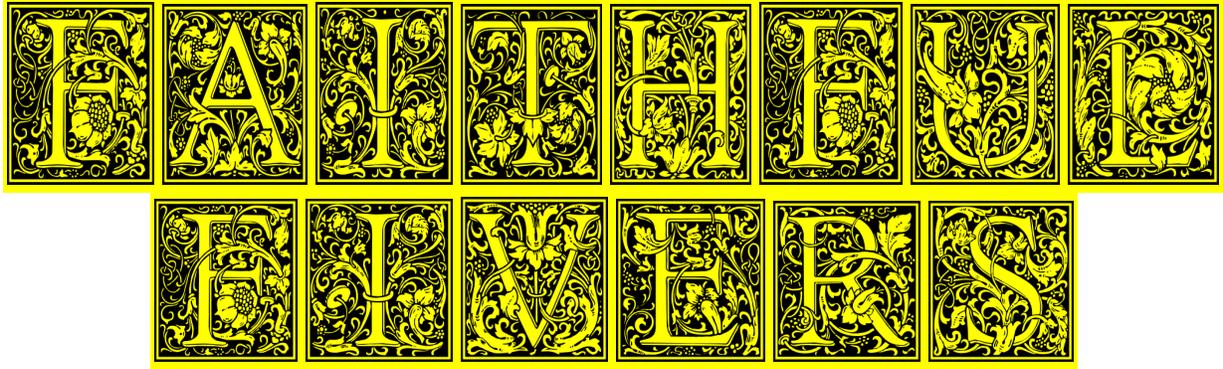
“God, help me enjoy and cherish this holiday. If my situation is less than ideal, help me take what’s good and let go of the rest.” - Pg. 8



S.O.S(Sheets of Sobriety), needs your input! Do you fancy yourself an artist, a writer, a poet or a jokester? Do you have any ideas or input on what should or shouldn't be in the paper? Do you have a question you would like answered? If you answered yes, then we have a great service opportunity for you! Simply send your ideas to briaocon@gmail.com or to **1915 West 18th St. Suite D Indianapolis, IN 46202. All ideas are welcome! Also sign up for a free email subscription by sending your email to the same address above!**



“God, help me enjoy and cherish this holiday. If my situation is less than ideal, help me take what’s good and let go of the rest.” - Pg. 9



“Faithful Fivers” are A.A. members who donate \$5 or more per month to help support Indianapolis Intergroup. As a Faithful Fiver, your contribution can and will help us carry the message of Alcoholics Anonymous.

“ When we meet and defeat the temptation to take large gifts we are only being prudent. But when we are generous with the hat, we give a token that we are grateful for our blessing and evidence that we are eager to share what we have found with all those who still suffer.” Bill W, Language of the Heart
The Faith Fiver idea came about when we remembered that we wasted much more than five dollars each month during our drinking days.

Indianapolis Intergroup Faithful Fiver Form

Date-

YES, I want to help continue to carry our life-saving message of hope.

I will pay Annually ___ (\$60) ___ Quarterly (\$15) ___ Monthly (\$5)

Please email reminder-

Email-

Here is my contribution of \$ for Months

Name -

Address -

City, State, Zip -

Phone number -

Please make check payable to: Indianapolis Intergroup

1915 West 18th Street

Indianapolis, IN 46202

(317) 632-7864

“God, help me enjoy and cherish this holiday. If my situation is less than ideal, help me take what’s good and let go of the rest.” - Pg. 10