

# **Sheets of Sobriety - January 2015**

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**~Spreading the message one paper at a time!~**

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## **A.A. Thought for the Day**

After we had sobered up through the A.A. program, we gradually began to get a peace of mind and serenity which we never thought were possible. This peace of mind is based on a feeling that fundamentally all is well. That does not mean that all is well on the surface of things. Little things can keep going wrong and big things can keep on upsetting us. But deep down in our hearts we know that everything is eventually going to be all right, now that we are living sober lives. Have I achieved a deep down, inner calm?

## **Meditation for the Day**

You are climbing up the ladder of life, which reaches into eternity. Would God plant your feet upon an insecure ladder? Its supports may be out of sight, hidden in secret places, but if God has asked you to step on and up firmly, then surely He has secured your ladder. Faith gives you the strength to climb steadily this ladder of life. You should leave your security to God and trust Him not to let you fall. He is there to give you all the power you need to keep on climbing.

## **Prayer for the Day**

I pray that I may climb the ladder of life without fear. I pray that I may progress steadily through the rest of my life with faith and confidence.

**>From the book *Twenty-Four Hours a Day***

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## **Recovering One Day At A Time**

**By: BMO**



Anxiety consumed me as I place one foot in the door. There were smiling faces everywhere, people laughing as if this were a joke. I raced for a seat, hoping no one would notice me. I could feel eyes on me. They knew I was new. The meeting began and readings, that I later learned were read at every meeting, were passed out and read my different members. There was How it Works, which outlined the program of Alcoholics Anonymous and steps we take to recover, The Traditions, which explains why the program works, and The Promises, which explained the rewards we will receive if we work the program explained in the previous readings. After that segment of the meeting there anniversaries that people announced, which had me baffled at how people could actually stay sober for months and even years. There were people in this room celebrating more years than I had even been alive! They also asked if there was anyone attending their very first meeting ever, and I cautiously announced myself as a newcomer. I was asked to stand up and I received a 24 hour token, which had phrases on it like, "one day at a time", "to thine own self be true" and the serenity prayer on the back. I was excited that I got a gift just for attending a meeting!

After the meeting I was surrounded by women, offering words of wisdom and encouragement and handing me phone numbers to use when in trouble. After some time I did learn to use what we in A.A. refer to as the "500 pound phone", and ask for help when needed. Calling these women encouraged me to attend meeting after meeting, participate in the fellowship, get a sponsor and work the steps with a sponsor.

Three weeks after my first meeting I braved the question and asked someone to be my sponsor. From there the journey began. I didn't succeed in staying sober at first, but I kept coming back, craving this spiritual awakening that was so often-ly referred to. I went through a few sponsors before I was able to completely work all 12 steps and begin the journey of staying sober one day at a time and living a spiritual lifestyle, practicing all the principals of the program in all of my affairs.

Two years later I am more excited than ever. The program of Alcoholics Anonymous is a thrilling and exciting adventure that never ends. There's no end to learning and growing. I love it when a newcomer graces us with their presence. I see the fear and hesitation, and I smile at the journey that they can't even imagine that is about to unfold if they stick with us.

One day at a time, I stay sober, happy, joyous and free. I spread the message, work with others, and hold out my hand to anybody who needs a hand to hold. Life is exciting. Learning is exciting. The world is filled with beauty if only we open our eyes and view it. I can't wait to see where I'm headed next, because no matter what my Higher Power has a plan that will teach me a lesson and help to grow. The world I live in is a roller coaster, a thrilling adventure. I walk boldly, humbly through life knowing that nothing in this world will happen to me that God and I can't handle. And that, is the excitement that drives me.

**"Serenity is not freedom from the storm but peace within the storm" - Pg. 2**

## **Tradition of the Month:**

### **Tradition One -**



### **Our common welfare should come first. Personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.**

"Each member of Alcoholics Anonymous is but a small part of a great whole. A.A. must continue to live or most of us will surely die. Hence our common welfare comes first. But individual welfare follows close afterward." Our whole A.A. program is securely founded on the principle of humility--that is to say, perspective. Which implies, among other things, that we relate ourselves rightly to God and to our fellows; that we each see ourselves as we really are--"a small part of a great whole." Seeing our fellows thus, we shall enjoy group harmony. That is why A.A. Tradition can confidently state, "Our common welfare comes first."

"Does this mean," some will ask, "that in A.A. the individual doesn't count too much? Is he to be swallowed up, dominated by the group?" No, it doesn't seem to work out that way. Perhaps there is no society on earth more solicitous of personal welfare, more careful to grant the individual the greatest possible liberty of belief and action. Alcoholics Anonymous has no "musts." Few A.A. groups impose penalties on anyone for non-conformity. We do suggest, but we don't discipline. Instead, compliance or non-compliance with any principle of A.A. is a matter for the conscience of the individual; he is the judge of his own conduct. Those words of old time, "Judge not," we observe most literally. "But," some will argue, "if A.A. has no authority to govern its individual members or groups, how shall it ever be sure that the common welfare does come first? How is it possible to be governed without a government? If everyone can do as he pleases, how can you have aught but anarchy?" The answer seems to be that we A.A.s cannot really do as we please, though there is no constituted human authority to restrain us. Actually, our common welfare is protected by powerful safeguards. The moment any action seriously threatens the common welfare, group opinion mobilizes to remind us; our conscience begins to complain. If one persists, he may become so disturbed as to get drunk; alcohol gives him a beating. Group opinion shows him that he is off the beam, his own conscience tells him that he is dead wrong, and, if he goes too far, Barleycorn brings him real conviction. So it is we learn that in matters deeply affecting the group as a whole, "our common welfare comes first." Rebellion ceases and cooperation begins because it must; we have disciplined ourselves. Eventually, of course, we cooperate because we really wish to; we see that without substantial unity there can be no A.A., and that without A.A. there can be little lasting recovery for anyone. We gladly set aside personal ambitions whenever these might harm A.A. We humbly confess that we are but "a small part of a great whole."

Bill W. - The A.A. Grapevine, December, 1947

## **THE STRANGE OBSESSION**

**By Bill W.**



It was a hot night in the mid summer of 1934. I found myself at a noted address in Central Park West, New York City. It was in Charlie Towns Hospital for drying out alcoholics. Sobering and sweltering out a fearful hangover I laid abed in an upstairs room. Downstairs the doctor looked across his desk at my wife Lois. She was saying, "Doctor, why can't Bill stop drinking? He always had great willpower. Yet here he is, facing ruin again, and still he can't stop. The more he struggles, the worse he gets. I am scared, heartbroken and confused. I know he is, too. He'd do anything - anything at all to stop. Tell me, Doctor, why can't he?"

Lois was asking the same terrible question that uncounted women had asked before. Her's was a riddle quite as old as man's first discovery that alcohol could be made from grapes and grains. Again she said, "Please tell me the truth doctor. Why can't Bill stop?"

In his long experience with serious drinkers the good doctor had faced that terrible heartbreaker a thousand times. By nature compassionate, he never failed to wince whenever a distraught wife, husband or friend of a sufferer had profounded anew the burdened riddle of alcoholism. Bill's dilemma had interested and moved him deeply. How could he now bring himself to tell Lois the truth? The benign little doctor's face turned grave as he began to speak. "When Bill first came to this hospital three years ago, I felt that he might be one of those rare cases who might recover. I hoped that when he better understood himself and the nature of his illness, he might win out. In spite of his several severe relapses since then, I have gone on hoping. For, as you say, he desperately wants to quit and his will to do so is very great. But now I'm discouraged. I'm afraid he's going to be like nearly all the other alcoholics who come my way."

"Well Doctor," cried Lois, "just what do you mean by that. Won't he ever get better?"

Gently, the Doctor went on, "Mrs. W.," said he, "As you already understand, your husband is a sick man. But I've never told you just how sick an alcoholic can be, nor have I ever explained this illness to you as I understand it from my long observation. I think the time is here to tell you more about his illness and how really serious his condition now is. There are a lot of theories about the underlying causes of compulsive drinking like Bill's. Of these we can take our pick. But there are some solid facts too, which no one who has watched many alcoholics could well dispute.

"Fact one is that innumerable alcoholic men and women really want to control their destructive drinking and then find, to their dismay, that they cannot. They cannot

**“Serenity is not freedom from the storm but peace within the storm” - Pg. 4**

moderate their drinking as other people do. Nor, even when faced with the most terrible consequences, can they stop altogether, no matter how desperate their plight. Never do the excuses they make for their sprees justify their pattern of continuous self-destruction. Their behavior becomes completely illogical and irrational - it really verges on insanity. And even when they well understand all this, they go on as before. Where alcohol is concerned, their minds no longer rule their emotions.

"A new spree can be started upon the slightest of excuses or rationalizations. Sometimes the provocations seem great, but it's always very small when the certain destructive results are considered. When for example life gives the average man a heavy bump, he doesn't seize a hammer and beat himself into insensibility. Yet, in effect, that's what the sick alcoholic does, over and over. All reason, all incentive, even the greatest desire to stop, seems to be swamped when the craving for alcohol takes hold.

"Therefore the biggest fact about alcoholism is its obsessional nature. It is one of the most subtle yet most powerful compulsions known. Once it's grip is firm, the chance for recovery is diminished. How to help the alcoholic to expel his obsession is the problem. But we doctors have had little success: I've seldom helped even one case in a hundred.

"Nor is the drinkers obsession the whole story: alcoholism is a physical malady too. In nearly all cases the bodies of problem drinkers become painfully sensitive to alcohol. In the early stages of their malady some alcoholics can drink quantities of liquor without serious physical reaction. But continued excesses finally cause them to lose that ability; they seem to get allergic to the stuff; so much so that hangovers produce great physical agony and sometimes delirium tremens or convulsions too often followed by brain damage and mental deterioration than can be permanent."

Again she asked, "Doctor, what can we do?"

So he had to tell her that I would have to be locked up or go mad and die. That it would all end with heart failure during delirium tremens, or that I would develop a wet brain, perhaps within a year. That soon I would have to be given over to an asylum or an undertaker.

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"Alcoholism is an obsession of the mind that condemns one to drink and an allergy of the body that condemns one to die." -- Dr. Wm. D. Silkworth

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Bill again relapsed, and on December 11, 1934, he was again admitted to Towns Hospital for the last time.

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A guy is at the bar, just staring at his drink, when a big truck driver steps up next to him, takes the guy's drink, and gulps it down. The guy starts crying. The truck driver says, "Come on, man, I was just fucking around. Here, I'll buy you another drink. For Christ sakes, don't cry." The guy says, "You don't understand. This has been the worst day of my life. First, I sleep late, and when I get to my office, my boss fires me. When I get to the parking lot, I find out my car is stolen. I get a cab home, and when I get there, I remember I left my wallet and credit cards in my desk at work. The cab driver doesn't believe me, and kicks my ass. When I finally go in the house, I find my wife in bed with the gardener. So I come to this bar, and just when I'm thinking about ending it all, you show up and drink my poison."

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Always do sober what you said you'd do drunk. That will teach you to keep your mouth shut. --Ernest Hemingway

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One night in a local pub, a man stumbled up to the only other patron in a bar and asked if he could buy him a drink. "Why of course," came the reply. The first man then asked, "Where are you from?" "I'm from Ireland," replied the second man. The first man responded, "You don't say, I'm from Ireland too! Let's have another round to Ireland." "Of course," replied the second man. Curious, the first man then asked, "Where in Ireland are you from?" "Dublin," came the reply. "I can't believe it," said the first man. "I'm from Dublin too!" He continued, "Let's have another drink to Dublin." "Of course," replied the second man. Curiosity again struck and the first man asked, "what school did you go to?" "Saint Mary's," replied the second man. "I graduated in '62." "This is unbelievable!" the first man said. "I went to Saint Mary's and graduated in '62, too!" About that time, one of the regulars came into the bar and sat down. "What's been going on?" he asked the bartender. "Nothing much," replied the bartender. "The O'Malley twins are drunk again!"

Laughter  
is an  
instant  
vacation.  
- Milton Berle  
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I love people who  
can make me laugh,  
when I don't even  
want to smile.

A DAY  
WITHOUT  
LAUGHTER  
IS A DAY  
WASTED.  
- Mark Twain

Laughter  
is the shortest  
distance between  
two people  
- Lucille Ball



**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](mailto: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!**

