

# Sobriety Sentinel

November 2023 - REPRESENTING DISTRICTS 14, 19 and 20 of AREA 38 - TRICOUNTYAA.ORG

## One Day at a time - One Moment at a Time

I wonder if there has ever been anyone born in this life who had a plan that worked out just as they had imagined. As I pondered that thought, I realized it is not possible to attain that on this Earth. It is certainly not attainable for an alcoholic!

We are born into the arms and mercy of others. Their actions and decisions, their personalities, their ethics and morals and their transgressions affect our path. Not just after birth but even in the womb and for some even before that, in cases where a birth is planned. For many of us alcoholics, we were born into an alcoholic family. For others of us, we were exposed to alcohol while in the womb.

As a child, the world around us then affects our lives. The actions of others, the environment, our own impulses and at some point our own decision making. We rely on the careful supervision and guidance of others to help us along the way.

This brings me to my next thought to contemplate. Why is it that in certain instances, individuals who have faced a multitude of trials and tribulations either overcome those circumstances or fall to them. In retrospect, individuals who are born into and experience a happy and healthy environment also can end up falling to the world we live in or triumphing. Some of us alcoholics, never saw a family member take a drop of alcohol. There was never alcohol in our homes. Why then do we have this disease? There are people out there who grew up in alcoholic homes and were exposed to the environment on a daily basis, who have never tasted a drink. Why and how does this happen?

What then is the common factor for those who triumph over those who fall?

I guess one aspect we have to consider is whether or not those individuals have a higher power, be it God, Buddha, the moon or whatever else they choose. In believing there is a higher power, you have to surrender to it. But is it possible to ever completely surrender yourself and your own will? To me that seems like an almost impossible feat. So, I draw the conclusion it isn't the answer to my pondering.

If not then, let's consider one's own will. To some degree this consideration makes the most rational sense. Every action you take ultimately results in the path you travel. However, regardless of the choices you make, you can't control the choices of others and the circumstances of the world. For instance, one could have the perfect plan for their day that guides them on the path they intend but it is disrupted by the driver who runs a red light and collides into their vehicle. That plan, their will, is interrupted whether it be a minor interruption or a major interruption, it ultimately changes the path of their plan in that moment, resulting in an altered path every moment thereafter. To say that we alcoholics have strayed from our plan is an understatement - I don't think any of us planned to end up in Alcoholics Anonymous!

So then, what is the cause and effect of triumph over failure? People overcome insurmountable obstacles - or do they? Is it really just a matter of perception? One person's idea of triumph can be another person's idea of failure. Can it not? Perhaps it is a consideration of all of the things mentioned above that lead to my conclusion that no, it is not possible for a single person on this Earth to plan for and live a life just as they had imagined. There is no such reality. The next moment in time is not promised; therefore, one can only exist in this exact moment. Planning, promises, goals and ambitions are all at the mercy of the universe, be it God or something else.

As humans, we have been programmed over time to exist in this ever evolving world. In the beginning, humans lived just for basic survival - food, water, shelter. To succeed one only needed those basic things. With time, as the world has evolved, all of those needs have changed - different food, healthier water, sophisticated shelter and stuff and more and more stuff. With this evolving world, so has our idea of triumph and failure evolved. Rather than every one existing to meet our basic needs, we now compete against each other in every aspect of life. During that evolution, through time, the very definition of being a human has changed. Solidifying my thought that only this very moment matters in the world we live in. That is not to say we shouldn't plan or prepare for the future. The same as food, water and shelter were a human necessity in the beginning of time, so now there is a plan to exist on this Earth.

However, the plan has to be ever evolving. The ability to adapt to life, to accept successes and failures and to overcome obstacles is the key to perseverance. Finding a balance that allows for the belief in something greater than you in the Universe which will insert its will into your life, coupled with your own will, chance circumstances and acknowledging your responsibility to past decisions is the only way to survive. Accepting that no success or failure is forever because the next moment in time doesn't yet exist. For this very reason, it is my opinion "one day at a time" is one of the most important pieces of advice we get from our AA literature.

Written by: Anonymous

## Accepting Grace

I never meant to be an alcoholic. I surely didn't mean to cause sadness, pain, fear or shame, especially not to the people I loved the most. I've never heard another AA member say that hurting their loved ones was in their plans, either - many times I've heard them say they thought they were only hurting themselves. That's what I believed, too, or at least that's what I told myself I believed. It was a coping mechanism, a way I could live with the guilt I felt.

Believing lies you tell yourself may sound ridiculous, but that's how cunning, baffling and powerful alcoholism is. I had to believe I was only hurting myself because I couldn't live with myself otherwise.

I became a single mom at age 18. My daughter's father committed suicide when she was 4½. She was an only child. I was all she had in the world. It must have been terrifying for her growing up, watching her mother in the grips of alcoholism, not knowing what would happen to her if I didn't make it. I was nothing like the mother she deserved.

I didn't get sober until my daughter was 27 years old. Even though I am a different person than I was when I was drinking, I still experience guilt and regret sometimes. The Twelve Steps have provided me with a mechanism to rebuild what my bottles and I demolished. Without AA and the Steps, I wouldn't have known where to start.

My relationships with family, friends and especially with my daughter are works in progress, and there is always room for further improvement. With every interaction, I feel a little closer, a little more trusted.

Sometimes I feel unworthy of love and acceptance from others because of the pain I put them through. I have a difficult time accepting their forgiveness. There's a tiny bit of resistance inside me that I can't exactly define. Maybe it's because I still don't completely trust myself. I'm flawed.

I'll always be an alcoholic, but I've realized that forgiveness is a choice. Every person I hurt in the past who has chosen to forgive me is a blessing.

The Promises are manifesting in my life. I don't want to let my feelings of regret stand in the way of a beautiful future. Instead, I chose to embrace my sober, happy AA way of life! All I need to do is "the next right thing," one day at a time. Pretty simple and achievable with the help of AA. Don't resist happiness!

Written by: Missy R.

# Self Supporting Financially and in Relationships

The 12 Traditions are the glue that holds AA together and the compass that guides AA in the right direction. Each month we look at a Tradition, where possible, associate it with one or more of the Steps, and describe how it can be used in our AA world and beyond Alcoholics Anonymous.

**Tradition 7 Short Form:** Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

A group can hardly hold its regular meetings on a street corner, and an empty basket won't fill a coffee pot. As soon as we become active in a group, we learn how many expenses are involved in making its meetings effective. Then our horizons broaden. What about that intergroup or central office so many of us called to ask for help? Phone companies don't give free service. Beyond our own locality, we learn about the A.A. General Service Office and the work it does for groups everywhere. All A.A. activity is self-supporting, and in every case the responsibility comes right back to us, the individual members, for we are A.A. Perhaps, especially when we are very new, our contributions clink, rather than rustle. The first members were in the same fix, and it seemed to them that A.A. would need more outside help than the modest gifts then coming in.

In its simplest application, Tradition Seven is easily understood; when we hear about a new A.A. group being started with funds from a Federal antipoverty program, our quick reaction is "Somebody goofed!" But then we come to "borderline" cases: Groups put on a

raffle for the benefit of their central office and invite the public to buy tickets; a hometown paper runs an ad for an A.A. dance and show. Both projects would be routine for any other society. For us, both mean that we've got the hand out again, asking nonmembers for money.

Often, of course, we don't have to ask. A.A. is now high on the worthy-cause list; G.S.O. and groups politely turn down many unsolicited gifts and bequests. In Tradition Seven, there's a note of realism: Handsome gifts may have strings attached. We even put a limit of \$5,000 on the amount members may leave to A.A. in their wills or contribute annually while living, so that none of us can buy influence in A.A., no matter how rich we are. Money may pose a different problem if a group treasury grows too fat, beyond a prudent reserve. Squabbling over uses for the spare cash, groups have lost their unity and strayed from their purpose. But there's one simple solution that strengthens our unity and advances our purpose: Give the excess to A.A. activities and services....*From the 12 Traditions Illustrated*

**Principle:** Self Supporting-Responsibility

**Using Tradition 7 in our Relationships – Beyond A.A.:** Each of us must be responsible for him or herself. We must fully concede that our troubles are of our own making. If we cannot understand and accept that notion, then we are clearly saying that our troubles are caused by other people or places or things. But we've already conceded that we are powerless over people, places, or things. So that line of

thinking is a dead end.

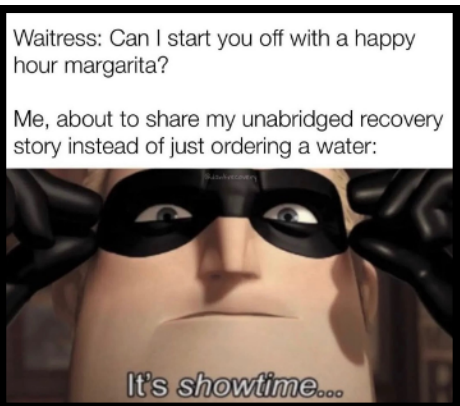
Why is it important in a relationship that both members are independent spiritually, emotionally and physically? It is easy for the member of the relationship that is bringing in the finances, or the greater amount of finances, to control through the purse strings. This control can become ropes to bind the other partner. Resentments, fear, and other problems occur from this type of attitude and action. The non-earning or lesser-earning member of the relationship may feel that they are losing their identity. The earning member of the relationship may begin to feel that their only purpose is to be a paycheck in the relationship.

The same is true when one person in the relationship is overly dependent on the other for their emotional well-being. Our self-worth comes from within and from God, not from having to have someone in our life to feel okay about ourselves. When we are dependent upon someone else for our well-being, we are vulnerable prey for sick relationships.

When each partner of the relationship understands that they are responsible for their own survival and progress, a greater spiritual strength flows into each and the relationship is made doubly strong. Each partner can do their own part without asking or expecting the other to do it for them. We each can be responsible for our own growth.

*Written by: Greg K.*

# SENTINEL SARCASM...RULE 62



# OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH POWER

As a newcomer, I was comforted and welcomed early on by the phrases “Why don’t you choose your own conception of God?” and “God as we understood Him.” Along with the Big Book chapter “We Agnostics,” these open-ended concepts helped me make contact with a loving Higher Power. What a relief, and how glorious! I later learned that Bill W used 20 different words and phrases for God in the agnostic chapter, to emphasize how broad our program’s spiritual highway truly is. This is the complete list:

God	Presence
Power	Reality
Spirit	Realm of the Spirit
Creator	Great Reality
Maker	Creative Intelligence
Intelligence	Universal Mind
Principle	Great Spirit
Cause	Father of Light
Providence	Supreme Being
Spirit of the Universe	Infinite Power

I’ve found it a productive spiritual exercise to review this list periodically, choose three of the words or phrases that most resonate with me, then ask myself, and answer in prayer and in writing:

What does this word or phrase mean to me? How could I best connect with it in prayer, meditation or other practices? How does this word or phrase fit into the types of relationships with God that are described on Pages 62-63 of the Big Book?

The last question is my favorite to play around with, and I’ll give some personal examples. These are my current favorite three phrases for God from the “We Agnostics” list, and how they fit – for me, today, as I understand them –

into the various types of spiritual relationships we can have with God.

Father of Light – This fits the Parent/Child relationship, assuring me God is the source of all that is good. As God’s child, I have His spiritual DNA and can express His good when I seek and execute His will. As humans, we are flawed and so are our earthly parents, but as the closing line of “Doctor Bob’s Nightmare” assures us, “Your Heavenly Father will never let you down!”

Great Reality – This fits the Teacher/Student relationship. The steps produce spiritual awakening, and the more awake I become, the more I see Great Reality, not the distorted reality I produce through unaided self-will. Learning how to see through the “new pair of glasses” is itself, I believe, a product of God’s role as my ultimate Teacher.

Spirit of the Universe – This fits the Principal/Agent relationship. In financial terms, the principal is the backer, the director, and the giver of both resources and assignments. The agent is the competent, trusted action-taker who does the bidding of the principal. As God’s agents, we are the presence, scattered throughout the earth, that carries out the will of Spirit in the physical universe.

I believe if you seek, you’ll find; if you knock, the door will open; if you ask in harmony with the will of God, you’ll receive. Take some time today to seek, knock and ask for a brand-new, deepened experience with Higher Power.

Written by:Andrew H.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS



**Recovery Couples Anonymous**  
A Twelve-Step Program for Couples  
Meetings take place every  
Wednesday of the month at  
7pm  
Location:  
212 Club  
204 W Pitman  
O’Fallon, MO 63366  
For more information visit website  
<https://recovery-couples.org>

**THE OLD TIMER SPEAKER SERIES**  
**SPONSORED BY ARCH**  
502 SOUTH 5TH STREET, ST CHARLES, MO 63301  
**FEATURING SPEAKERS WITH 20+ YEARS SOBRIETY**  
**10/21/2023 THERESA N.**  
**11/18/2023 CRIS C.**  
**12/16/2023 DOMINIC D.**  
**COMPLIMENTARY STARBUCKS COFFEE**  
**OPEN MIXED MEETING**  
**3RD SATURDAY**  
**OF THE MONTH**  
**@ 6:00 PM**



ARCH-STC.ORG ~ 314-744-0971

**10TH ANNUAL GRATITUDE MEETING**  
**WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 22**  
**@ ST. CHARLES PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
131 GAMBLE STREET ST. CHARLES

**DOORS OPEN**  
@ 6:00 PM  
**SPEAKERS**  
5 AA AND  
5 AL-ANON  
**FROM**  
7:00 - 8:00



**CONTACT INFO**  
**Jamie C**  
636-466-9866  
**John A**  
314-583-7074

**ZOOM QR CODE**

**ZOOM ID: 5622149567**  
Password: steppers

**2023 HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE**  
**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3**  
**1:30 PM – 4:30 PM**  
**@ 212 CLUB**



**NEW MEETING**  
ADULT CHILDREN OF ALCOHOLICS  
**TUESDAYS @ 212 CLUB**  
**ROOM B @ 7:00 PM**



**LOOKING TO START OR RELOCATE A MEETING**  
THE ARCH FACILITY, 502 SOUTH FIFTH STREET  
**ST. CHARLES HAS PRIME**  
SPACE AND CHOICE TIME SLOTS AVAILABLE TO HOST  
**AA OR OTHER 12 STEP MEETINGS**



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# Al-Anon Participation

## MONSTERS

It's fitting at this time of year to reflect on monsters. We imagine the hairy kind with big eyes lurking under beds and in closets, the creepy clown hidden beneath the sewer lid, or the ghost in the basement. However, there are ones planted in our lives which we identify very differently. The monsters in my life have evolved from scary folklore to living legends ... from my biggest fears, to getting to know the best version of myself.

As an adolescent, I feared the typical creepy fur balls lurking in the darkness of my room; yet, when I met the first "real" monster in my life, that fur ball became the safest place to be. Mental illness plagued my home in my childhood; before Al Anon, in unity with AA, I would have thrown in a who, what, when synopsis including all their faults. At this point, that would just be gossip.

The next monster in my life wouldn't disappear for weeks or months at a time, but this time I wish it did. I was diagnosed with an Eating Disorder the first year of High School. This monster first acted like an easy companion to balance, but, before I could see him for what he was, he was already leading my life's procession with no input from me. I played the game for many years, trying to find balance between normalcy and unreconciled trauma, but there was only one thing (and

only my Higher Power knew it) that could pull me out of this all-too-real pity pot. At 17, despite being told two years earlier I'd never have children due to my malnutrition issues in adolescent development years, I discovered I was going to be a mom. If I knew my Higher Power like I do now, I would have laughed at this hysterical event. The first person I told laughed out loud and said, "You didn't even have a mom, how the hell are you going to be a good one?".

I surely didn't have all the right answers, but I was quite familiar with the wrong ones. That might have been my first spark of sanity. I was sick and tired of being the victim, but I hadn't quite learned I assigned the roles.

After several years into motherhood and recovery from ED (my personified Eating Disorder), I learned to project this trauma into every single relationship I would face throughout my twenties. This included: two emotionally abusive relationships (trauma bonds might be more accurate) which led to three beautiful children (blessings thru my induced hell); several years of untrustworthy dating; a one-week marriage to an addict who would eventually OD after his Class C Child Abuse felony charge against my son put him back in prison; and a series of therapy sessions that felt like

Déjà vu. What I conceived as my next spark of sanity, I complained to my therapist about my current partner, whom in my world was a saint because he was "only" an alcoholic. I finally proclaimed, after all these years, I think there's something wrong with me - not them. He replied, "I think you're right". I just remember the entire world stopped turning when that sentence was accepted as truth.

One definition of insanity is defined as repeating an act over and over while expecting a different result. Insanity had been my normalcy. When I accepted this as truth, I saw my monsters in a different light. They weren't monsters at all, just misunderstood and neglected parts of myself that needed self-care. Mental illness, alcoholism, drug addiction, love addiction-all these things challenged me to get to know my true self and accept even the parts of me I'm not so proud of. I used to dress these parts up in costume like creepy fur balls and hide them in dark spaces. But now, I shine a light on them, and I learn from them. I use my tools from the Al Anon program, and the grace from my Higher Power, to transform them into better choices and the stronger person to who I am today.

Written by: Anonymous

## 7th Step Promises

**BY THIS TIME IN ALL PROBABILITY, WE HAVE GAINED SOME MEASURE OF RELEASE FROM OUR MORE DEVASTATING HANDICAPS. WE ENJOY MOMENTS IN WHICH THERE IS SOMETHING LIKE REAL PEACE OF MIND. TO THOSE OF US WHO HAVE HITHERTO KNOWN ONLY EXCITEMENT, DEPRESSION, OR ANXIETY--IN OTHER WORDS, TO ALL OF US--THIS NEWFOUND PEACE IS A PRICELESS GIFT. (12 AND 12, P. 74)**

