



Sobriety Variety



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Having that Attitude of Gratitude

By Dave H.

Most of the time when I share at a meeting I introduce myself as Dave H., a grateful alcoholic. Oftentimes when I do that there's someone in the room who winces, or at least cringes at my expression of gratitude. I can almost hear them think, "You mean you're an alcoholic who's grateful to be sober," or "Dang! Here's someone who's really full of it. How can anyone be grateful they're an alcoholic?"

I know that as an alcoholic I can never drink like folks who aren't afflicted with our disease, which means that if I want to enjoy all of the blessings God has bestowed upon me I can never drink at all---ever! Whenever my mind travels down that path, wondering what a dry beer tastes like, pondering on how a Smirnoff Ice would go down, I can feel my gratitude slip away. Truth is thinking about never drinking again

makes me nuts, so I don't do it.

So how is it that I am grateful to be an alcoholic? Well' the first thing I'm grateful about is the fact that as an alcoholic I get to go to all of those meetings. There are plenty of folks who aren't alcoholic who have to go to those same meetings because some judge told them to, but I'm lucky; I get to go. Now I know most of my friends in the fellowship understand exactly what I'm talking about. The laughter, the honesty, the closer contact with God through my fellow alcoholics is a blessing and a joy, and if I weren't an alcoholic I wouldn't go.

Another biggie as far as my gratitude goes are the tools AA gives me that allows me to live life on life's terms. After years of sobriety I've learned how to be comfortable in my own skin, and that's something that would never have happened if I weren't alcoholic. There are a lot of people who are just miserable being who they are, and if they were just alcoholic they could join us and learn how to laugh, how to enjoy all of the blessings God gives we alcoholics. I remember once there was a fellow I'd run into who was so miserable I suggested to him that he try some addictive mind altering substance so he could get into a twelve step program. Otherwise he was just

Higher Power Needed

We sat in the sun enjoying the good weather. One friend remarked, "I have to find a better Higher Power."

"Why?" We were concerned. He looked shaky.

"My sponsor said I needed a Higher Power and that it could be anything... even a light bulb, so I made the tree in my backyard my Higher Power.

"That worked OK for awhile. Each morning, before I left for work, I would walk out to my backyard, wave at the tree and say, 'So long Higher Power! I'm off to work!'" and each evening when I would return, I would walk into the backyard, wave at the tree and say, 'I'm back Higher Power! Everything went Ok today! Thanks!'"

"So what's wrong with that?"

"I walked into the backyard this time and the tree was gone! The electric company cut it down."

"Why would they do that?"

"They said my Higher Power was interfering with everyone else's power lines."

We laughed.

Then he said, "Now I'm thinking of using the atom as my Higher Power. It's indestructible They can't break that up into pieces."

We whispered to each other. "Should we tell him? We had better tell him before someone else does."

They had split the atom.

-- your editor

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up the creek without a paddle, or even a canoe.

The friends I've come to know and love in AA are a huge blessing. Alcoholics truly are marvelous folks. They come in all sizes and shapes, all colors and all genders, all degrees of education and from all professions. As an alcoholic I have friends that I never would have had otherwise. For example, I've gotten close to and come to love a couple of gay men in AA, and it doesn't embarrass me to admit it. Of course I wouldn't admit this to my wife. She's not alcoholic so she can't understand how one can come to love their fellows the way we alcoholics love each other. There was a time in my life when I felt that admitting that I loved my fellow man would suggest that I'm gay. Now I really don't care what that might suggest, unless I'm talking to my wife.

The biggest blessing I get from AA and being an alcoholic is my closer contact with God as I understand him, or her. Basking in God's love is something I would never have come to enjoy were I not alcoholic. It's nice knowing that everything's going to be OK, even if it doesn't seem so from my perspective. It's great not to be in charge, or at least to think I am. It's especially comforting to know that whatever I do or screw up, I've got the greatest power in the universe watching out for me.

I know alcoholism is a terrible disease that kills good people and destroys families, but it's also a disease that has given me a second chance at life, a chance I would never have gotten were I not alcoholic.



Sign Up Now!!!!



Answer the Intergroup *HOTLINE* phones
from your home (or cell phone)*

One night per quarter - 6:00 PM to 8:00 AM

OR

Sat. or Sun. day time - 8:00 AM TO 8:00 PM

Sat. or Sun. night time - 8:00 PM TO 8:00 AM

*Calls will be forwarded to your phone from the Intergroup office.

The service commitment is one night per quarter (every three months).

Requirements for this valuable service work are:

- 1) Six (6) months of continuous sobriety
- 2) Have taken AA's Twelve Steps
- 3) Familiar with the seventh chapter of the Big Book
- 4) Willing to make the above commitment for one (1) Year

ALSO

Work the phone desk at the Intergroup Office

Three hour shift between 9:00 AM and 6:00 PM., M-F

Call Clint Ritter at (512)448-9017

From 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM

Monthly Meetings at Intergroup

- *Intergroup Reps*, 2nd Monday at 6:30 PM
- *Board of Trustees*, 3rd Thursday at 6:30 PM



AA History – The Akron Guide to the Twelve Steps

A Guide to the Twelve Steps
of Alcoholics Anonymous

(Continued from last month)

TWELFTH STEP

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

NOW YOU ARE on your own. Your AA friends have given you your tools and showed you how to use them. From now on it is your job to fashion your life.

In the first place, don't be thrown by the phrase "Spiritual experience." It may bring to mind something supernatural -- perhaps the lightning flashing, the thunder resounding. Or as in the case of Saul of Tarsus, a blinding flash of

August Volunteers at Intergroup

Office:		Hotline:	Stewart G.	Gary H.	Karen K.
John B.	Rachel W.	Scotty H.	Tonya B-R	Rusty K.	Chris S.
Dennis "Pete" P.	Patty G.	Meredith H.	Pam R.	Barb H.	Chris W.
Robert G.	Michelle J.	Dennis/Deanie	Bob J.	Nancy N.	Tom K.
Kevin M.	Scotty H.	Dana B.	Susie C.	Jenny W.	Jeremy B.
Jim H.	Eileen B.	Kevin M.	Jerry T.	Linda F.	Dave E.
Bob L.	Billy C.	John P.	Sandra H.	Joel	Leslie Ann D.
Roland P.	Marty C.	Sharon T.	Robert C.	Keith F.	Ian M.
Pam R.		Tammy D.	Laney B.	Lee A.	
Jamie D.		Kathy L.	Ed B.	John B.	

light. A sudden spiritual experience or awakening is extremely uncommon. Perhaps a score out of the thousands in AA have experienced it. But it is a slow process for the average person. We are inclined to confuse spirituality with theology, dogma, creed and ritual. Just remember that most of us are pretty new to this useful, decent way of living, so we must learn the spiritual side of the picture slowly and simply.

Remember this simple thing: The entire structure of the Christian religion is built on Love. The word has many synonyms, such as Charity, Grace, Good-will, Tenderness, Generosity, Kindness, Tolerance, Sympathy, Mercy, and others. When we help a fellow being, when we are kind to one another we are performing a completely spiritual act. Spirituality is simply the act of being selflessly helpful. If you will start with this simple

explanation you will find that the green light has been flashed on. Christ taught that there are two great commandments: to love God; and to love your neighbor as

yourself. If you can follow these you will have no trouble.

What you don't understand don't worry about. It will all become clear in a short while. If anything puzzles you, consult an older member of the group. He most likely will straighten out your thinking in a few words.

If you have gone through the first Eleven Steps you have come far. It is now time that you are carrying on the work. You owe your sponsor and your group one thing -- to carry the blessings of AA to some other alcoholic in need. You will be asked to call on a prospective member. Don't lose any time in doing so. Tell him your story. Tell him what you are trying to do. Tell him what AA has done for others. If you think you are too new, just remember that he is even newer, and if you have been sober only one day, he will look on you as a veteran.

Before long you will have a "baby" of your own. Then you

Recovery Jones



I don't have a problem any more.

I just don't drink

<http://www.recoveryjonescartoons.com/>

August Donations From Area AA Groups

Mon. Rush Hr. (Pflugerville) - \$50	Wed. Rush Hr. (Pflugerville) - \$50	Newcomers (Kingsland) - \$195
Four Points - \$20	Keep 1 st Things 1 st - \$186	Solutions Group (Bertram) - \$25
Bridge to Shore - \$730	New Beginnings - \$55	Hilltoppers - \$250
Children of Chaos - \$20	Lost Pines - \$80	Kyle - \$20
Grover Ave. BB Group - \$20	East Austin - \$60	Wimberley - \$30
Allandale - \$60	Live and Let Live - \$350	North Austin 24 - \$50
Into Action (Lockhart) - \$30	Fri. Rush Hr. (Pflugerville) - \$30	Early Action - \$57
Central - \$81	Northland - \$227	Total: \$2,676

will really have something to live for. You will worry about him, you will try to keep sober for him, you will guide him to the best of your ability, you will almost suffer with him as he comes out of his alcoholic fog. In doing this you will be giving of yourself, and you will find new joy in living.

Always keep it before you that the more you put into this work the more you will take out of it. The harder you work, the more activities you get into, the easier will be your road to sober living. There is no excuse for missing a meeting. There is no excuse for not helping someone when asked to. Always bear in mind that your alcoholic problem is the first thing in your life. It comes before everything else. For without sobriety you will have nothing -- no family, no job, no friends. And before too long you will have no sanity -- and will lose life itself. Share this new life with others. It will repay you ten thousandfold.

In conclusion, practice these steps in all your affairs. The Twelve Steps are not something to be gone through once and then forgotten. They are a set of rules for living that must be practiced at all times, never forgotten. Remember that you are an alcoholic, and but one drink away

from drunkenness again.

Remember that you are completely dependent on God as you understand Him.

Remember to keep your thinking straight.

Remember that a wrong act will prey on your mind until you either do something to rectify it or get drunk.

Remember that defects will creep into your life if given half a chance.

Remember that if only through gratitude, we must help others in order to help ourselves.

And if at any time you feel uncertain of yourself, read the Twelve Steps carefully, applying them to yourself. You will find an answer to your problem.

If the answer is not there, a telephone call or a visit to another member of AA will bring the answer.

The full text can be found at:

<http://hindsfoot.org/Akr12.html>

The first AA group to be formed in Akron, Ohio used spiritual materials they could find from various religious groups of the time. Much of the AA-related

material in those days was not considered religious per se though nowadays we would see it as overtly so. That is how I read the history. Your mileage may vary.

[Your editor]

**No new members for HCIA
BD Club.**

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