

AA District 18 Newsletter

Volume 4, Issue 8

August 2023

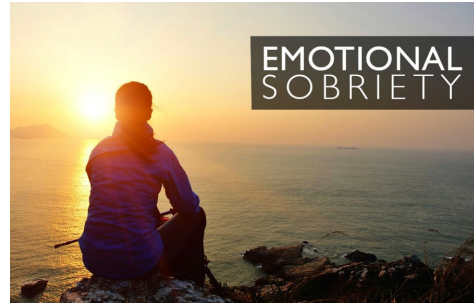


We have some late breaking news for District 18.

- **We need your help!** Area 21 and the GSO are wanting to make sure they have the correct information for each group's GSR in District 18. **You can make sure your group's GSR is current by filling out the Area 21 Group Change Form (link under Important Announcements at District 18 website) or <https://area21aa.org/group-change-form/>.** All GSRs will receive a digital GSR kit and can sign up for a GSR kit to be mailed.

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AA Grapevine Discussion: Character Defects

This month, we continue with AA Grapevine discussion questions. We highly encourage our readers to read the AA grapevine article relevant to the discussion, but it is not necessary to have read it or to be familiar with it. We are answering the questions based on our own experience with the hope that our answers will be helpful to our readers.

This month's discussion questions are from August's AA Grapevine issue, and are related to Emotional Sobriety.

'How have you gotten through challenging events in sobriety? What are some things that helped you? How does emotional sobriety help in times like these? What is emotional sobriety to you?'

In all honesty, I had no idea what emotional sobriety was. I heard the term mentioned in meetings and like places, but I needed to look it up to gain a better understanding of what it meant. In my searches, I found an article by Bill W., written for the Grapevine 1958. I've included it in this newsletter, as it shows some incite to what Bill was going through during his depression.

After a lengthy absence from the work force, I landed a job in what I enjoyed doing, which is designing consumer products. Many

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times when designing a product, problems with the design are not evident until production personal begin building it. There were products designed before my time with the company that had problems that the production personal asked to be fixed but never were. So they improvised around the problem.

One thing I've learned over the years is in order to produce a good product, there has to be active communication lines between production and engineering. When production finds a problem when building product, they bring it to engineering and a solution is found to eliminate the problem. We have to work as a team to produce the best product for our customer.

When I started working there, I would catch wind of a problem that production had when building a product. They were sometimes reluctant to bring the problem to engineering because the previous person often left the problem unresolved. So I started looking for solutions to the problems and began to improve the products. It felt like I was gaining the trust of production, that I would listen to what they found and would actually address and solve the problem.

But every time I solved a problem, the production manager would thank me and tell me that I was his favorite engineer. This happened over and over. Being a couple years sober, I just replied that I am trying to make things better and it takes a team. I was trying to employ the principles that A.A. taught me and be very mindful to not let the praise get the better of my ego. I worked hard at being humble.

Then a few weeks ago, I caught wind of a problem that production designed a work around for with one of the products. They took their solution straight to my boss, bypassing me. When I told them I was looking into a permanent solution, they told me this was the solution. I didn't know what to do. They had always come to me before with problems and a solution, but this time they did not. I was devastated and left asking myself a lot of

questions, like 'why didn't they come to me?' and 'did I do something to upset them or not trust me?' My mind told me I could have solved the problem but they didn't ask. My mind also told me to heck with them. Self-pity started taking over and my confidence was shaken. After a couple of days of these thoughts, I knew I needed to find out what was going on with me.

Even though they gave me praise for solving their problems and I worked to not let it affect my ego, maybe I did enjoy the praise. Every time I solved a problem, I received praise. It had affected my ego, even though I told myself that it didn't. When the opportunity to receive more praise was never offered to me, I was emotionally hurt. So how do to I fix this?

First, I cannot take it personally when someone else offers a solution. I realize I cannot fix all the problems. Second, being a team player sometimes means I have to be content to sit on the bench every once in a while. Someone else's skills might be better suited for this situation. Third, I do not have to be in control of every solution.

I did not come up these answers alone, I consulted with my Higher Power. I had to ask Him why am I feeling this way, I don't like it but I cannot stop this feeling. After a while, the answers came and I began to understand. My ego is a beast that likes to be fed, and even though I feel it's not being fed, scraps are thrown its way to keep it satisfied. I cannot keep my ego in check by myself, I need the assistance of my Higher Power.

John G



The vital principle of the 8th Step is the "Love of Others" by making our wrongs of the past as right as possible with direct amends.

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Love of Others (cont'd from pg. 2)

Early in my sobriety, I wanted every relationship to be fixed right now. I could not see the damage I had done to the relationships, as I only wanted everything to be better. While step 8 seems simple enough, Make a list of persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all, I found there is a deeper meaning to the step than to just make a list. My loss of love for other people began with the loss of love for myself. When I couldn't look into the mirror it was because I didn't like the person I had become. Because I didn't like myself, it was impossible to love myself. By the time I got to this step, I began to like myself, as I was sober and life had been getting better every day through working the steps. I began to love life again and that made it possible to love myself and begin to start caring about others. When I discovered that I did love the people I had harmed, I had to make things right. But love of others doesn't end with amends, it has affected my whole life.

I was driving to work one morning and heard on the radio about a possible broke down car on the Chain of Rocks Bridge (I-270). They couldn't see it with the traffic cameras and I couldn't see it on my traffic app, but by the time I got to the bridge, the traffic was beginning to back up. Immediately I went into self pity thinking I'm going to be late to work, or not get there when I wanted to. After a minute or so of that I stopped myself and asked what am I doing, then immediately said the Serenity Prayer. After the prayer, I thought about what the person with the broke down car must be feeling, probably feeling stuck, helpless and isolated. Watching all the cars and trucks slowly trickle by while waiting for help. I realized I'm just experiencing a minor inconvenience in my day, as that persons day got off to a really bad start. So I said a prayer for that person. When I stop thinking about myself, a whole new world presents itself. It allows me to love and care for other people.

JJG

INTERESTING DATES IN AUGUST AA HISTORY

AUGUST 8 1879: Dr. Bob, AA's co-founder, was born in St. Johnsbury, VT

AUGUST 1934: Ebby T., Bill W.'s boyhood friend & sponsor, sobers up in the Oxford Group for two years.

AUGUST 11 1938: 1st meeting of the Alcoholic Foundation (which later became GSO).

AUGUST 1939: Akron OH & the NY AA's begin writing their stories for the Big Book.

AUGUST 1939: Dr. Bob & Sister Ignatia admit the 1st of more than 5,000 drunks they will treat (over the next 10 years) at St. Thomas Hospital in Akron, OH.

AUGUST 1939: Dr. Silkworth & five other M.D.'s attend AA meeting at Bob & Meg V.'s home in Montclair, NJ.

AUGUST 1941: Los Angeles Daily News reports on AA picnic held at Griffith Park Zoo. AA's were invited to "come and see some real elephants."

AUGUST 1941: Bill writes to Dr. Bob to report that Works Publishing Co. has been incorporated.

AUGUST 1941: 1st AA meeting in Colorado is held in Denver.

AUGUST 1955: Bill W.'s long depression lifts after he turns the "Fellowship over to the Fellowship" at the St. Louis Int'l. Convention.

AUGUST 1958: The book "Twenty-Four Hours A Day" is written by Richard W. Besides the Big Book, it's the #2 best seller.

AUGUST 1981: Sales of the Big Book passed three million.

Upcoming Events for August

SPEAKER MEETING

- DATE: MONDAY, AUGUST 7TH, 2023
- TIME: 7:30PM-8:30 PM
- PLACE: BRIDGE CHURCH ALTON
504 EAST 12TH STREET, ALTON, IL
- SPEAKER: ANN S.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

- DATE: WEDNESDAY AUGUST 9TH, 2023
- TIME: 7:30PM-8:30PM
- LOCATION: HISTORY MUSEUM
114 SOUTH WASHINGTON ST., BUNKER HILL, IL

GSR WORKSHOP

- DATE: SUNDAY, AUGUST 13TH, 2023
- TIME: 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM
- PLACE: AT CSO
- TOPIC: LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW OUR SERVICE STRUCTURE WORKS IN A.A. AND THE IMPORTANCE OF THE GENERAL SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE (GSR). WANT TO BE A GSR OR WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT WHAT IT ENTAILS? THIS WORKSHOP IS FOR YOU!

GSR MEETING-HYBRID

- DATE: SUNDAY, AUGUST 20TH, 2023
- TIME: 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM
- PLACE: AT CSO AND ON ZOOM
- MEETING ID: 860 0054 3107
PASSCODE: 093088

TREATMENT AND BRIDGING THE GAP COMMITTEE MEETING

- DATE: SUNDAY, AUGUST 20TH, 2023
- TIME: 3:00 PM – 4:00 PM
- PLACE: AT CSO

Mark Your Calendars

GSR MEETING-HYBRID

- DATE: SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 17TH, 2023
- TIME: 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM
- PLACE: AT CSO AND ON ZOOM
- MEETING ID: 860 0054 3107
PASSCODE: 093088

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS



GRAPEVINE SUBSCRIPTIONS

Special note from D-18 GVR: If your home group has extra funds, please discuss during your group conscience whether your group could donate a Grapevine subscription to the Corrections Committee. Members take meetings and literature into correction facilities. It is a small way we can help change lives for the better. Grapevines destined for corrections can be dropped off at the CSO.

If you've thought of subscribing the Grapevine and have been putting it off, please consider subscribing and adding it to your sobriety tool kit. It's basically a meeting in a pocket, easy to carry with you and can provide inspiration when you need it. I've attached subscription forms at the end of this newsletter, and you can even gift a subscription to a friend.

Thank you,
John G. (D-18 GVR)

DO YOU HAVE AN UPCOMING EVENT OR A BIRTHDAY IN SEPTEMBER, or are you interested in contributing to the newsletter? Please send any of the above to info@aa.district18.org by 08/31/23, being mindful of our steps and traditions. Any suggestions or comments are always appreciated and can be sent to info@aa-district18.org.

THANK YOU for subscribing to our newsletter!

The Next Frontier : Emotional Sobriety

by Bill Wilson

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I think that many oldsters who have put our AA “booze cure” to severe but successful tests still find they often lack emotional sobriety. Perhaps they will be the spearhead for the next major development in AA—the development of much more real maturity and balance (which is to say, humility) in our relations with ourselves, with our fellows, and with God.

Those adolescent urges that so many of us have for top approval, perfect security, and perfect romance—urges quite appropriate to age seventeen—prove to be an impossible way of life when we are at age forty-seven or fifty-seven.

Since AA began, I’ve taken immense wallops in all these areas because of my failure to grow up, emotionally and spiritually. My God, how painful it is to keep demanding the impossible, and how very painful to discover finally, that all along we have had the cart before the horse! Then comes the final agony of seeing how awfully wrong we have been, but still finding ourselves unable to get off the emotional merry-go-round.

How to translate a right mental conviction into a right emotional result, and so into easy, happy, and good living—well, that’s not only the neurotic’s problem, it’s the problem of life itself for all of us who have got to the point of real willingness to hew to right principles in all our affairs.

Even then, as we hew away, peace and joy may still elude us. That’s the place so many of us AA oldsters have come to. And it’s a hell of a spot, literally. How shall our unconscious—from which so many of our fears, compulsions and phony aspirations still stream—be brought into line with what we actually believe, know and want! How to convince our dumb, raging and hidden “Mr. Hyde” becomes our main task.

I’ve recently come to believe that this can be achieved. I believe so because I begin to see many benighted ones—folks like you and me—commencing to get results. Last autumn [several years backed.] depression, having no really rational cause at all, almost took me to the cleaners. I began to be scared that I was in for another long chronic spell. Considering the grief I’ve had with depressions, it wasn’t a bright prospect.

I kept asking myself, “Why can’t the Twelve Steps work to release depression?” By the hour, I stared at the St. Francis Prayer... “It’s better to comfort than to be the comforted.” Here was the formula, all right. But why didn’t it work?

Suddenly I realized what the matter was. My basic flaw had always been dependence – almost absolute dependence – on people or circumstances to supply me with prestige, security, and the like. Failing to get these things according to my perfectionist dreams and specifications, I had fought for them. And when defeat came, so did my depression.

There wasn’t a chance of making the outgoing love of St. Francis a workable and joyous way of life until these fatal and almost absolute dependencies were cut away.

Because I had over the years undergone a little spiritual development, the absolute quality of these frightful dependencies had never before been so starkly revealed. Reinforced by what Grace I could secure in prayer, I found I had to exert every ounce of will and action to cut off these faulty emotional dependencies upon people, upon AA, indeed, upon any set of circumstances whatsoever.

Then only could I be free to love as Francis had. Emotional and instinctual satisfactions, I saw, were really the extra dividends of having love, offering love, and expressing a love appropriate to each relation of life.

Plainly, I could not avail myself of God’s love until I was able to offer it back to Him by loving others as He would have me. And I couldn’t possibly do that so long as I was victimized by false dependencies.

For my dependency meant demand—a demand for the possession and control of the people and the conditions surrounding me.

While those words “absolute demand” may look like a gimmick, they were the ones that helped to trigger my release into my present degree of stability and quietness of mind, qualities which I am now trying to consolidate by offering love to others regardless of the return to me.

This seems to be the primary healing circuit: an outgoing love of God’s creation and His people, by means of which we avail ourselves of His love for us. It is most clear that the current can’t flow until our paralyzing dependencies are broken, and broken at depth. Only then can we possibly have a glimmer of what adult love really is.

Spiritual calculus, you say? Not a bit of it. Watch any AA of six months working with a new Twelfth Step case. If the case says “To the devil with you,” the Twelfth Stepper only smiles and turns to another case. He doesn’t feel frustrated or rejected. If his next case responds, and in turn starts to give love and attention to other alcoholics, yet gives none back to him, the sponsor is happy about it anyway. He still doesn’t feel rejected; instead he rejoices that his one-time prospect is sober and happy. And if his next following case turns out in later time to be his best friend (or romance) then the sponsor is most joyful. But he well knows that his happiness is a by-product—the extra dividend of giving without any demand for a return.

The really stabilizing thing for him was having and offering love to that strange drunk on his doorstep. That was Francis at work, powerful and practical, minus dependency and minus demand.

In the first six months of my own sobriety, I worked hard with many alcoholics. Not a one responded. Yet this work kept me sober. It wasn’t a question of those alcoholics giving me anything. My stability came out of trying to give, not out of demanding that I receive.

Thus I think it can work out with emotional sobriety. If we examine every disturbance we have, great or small, we will find at the root of it some unhealthy dependency and its consequent unhealthy demand. Let us, with God’s help, continually surrender these hobbling demands. Then we can be set free to live and love; we may then be able to Twelfth Step ourselves and others into emotional sobriety.

Of course I haven’t offered you a really new idea—only a gimmick that has started to unhook several of my own “hexes” at depth. Nowadays my brain no longer races compulsively in either elation, grandiosity or depression. I have been given a quiet place in bright sunshine.



SATURDAY NIGHT LIBRARY GROUP

ANNUAL POTLUCK

September 23, 2023

6p: Doors Open

7p: Eat

8p: Speaker

Speaker: Bill R.

St. Mary's Catholic Church

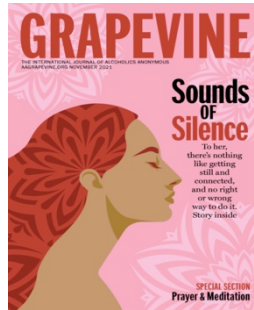
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