



AA District 18

Newsletter

Volume 6 | Issue 2 | February 2026

Editor: Matt B. Tuesday Night Group, Main St. Community Center, Edwardsville

Serenity Prayer

God, grant me...

*The serenity to accept the things I cannot
change,*

The courage to change the things I can,

And the wisdom to know the difference!

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Announcements

2026 Great River Roundup
Pere Marquette Lodge & Conference Center March 13th-14th,
2026 AA Bob C, AA Marc W, Al-Anon Tina H, AA Chris C
There will be a basket raffle and 50/50

Bloom Where Your Planted Women's Brunch
Bellecourt Manor
3/29/26
| Multiple

Circle of Unity Conference
Lake of the Ozarks, Missouri
March 27-29, 2026
4 AA speakers + Alanon
Entertainment, raffles, souvenirs, literature, fellowship, fun at
the lake!

Open Speaker Meeting The Bridge Church, 504 E 12th Street,
Alton, IL 62002 Monday February 2nd 7:30pm Carrie R.

New Women's Meeting Granite City -Saturday 1pm [Click for Info](#)

New Meeting in Granite City- Sat. 2116 Club Meeting 7pm -
8pm, Closed Discussion [Click for Info](#)

New Meeting in Granite City - Thrs. Attitude Adjustments a
New Way of Living [Click for Info](#)

Open Speaker Meeting 7:30pm
*District 18 GSR's *- Southern Illinois Area 21 presents a new
Service Information YouTube video. [Click here for GSR Training Video](#).

Area 21 Treatment Workshop
SOUTHERN IL AA CENTRAL SERVICE OFFICE 409
BROADWAY UNIT C1 SOUTH ROXANA, IL 62087
Sunday February 22nd 2026, 1-4p in person and on zoom.
Zoom: Meeting ID: 882 8299 8767 Passcode: 417192
February 15 – 2pm to 3 pm – GSR Meeting at CSO. Hybrid
meeting.

Click [here](#) to download 2024-2026 AA Service Manual.
[AA Service Manual](#)

Humor Corner

Once when I was drunk, I thought I was nailing life—deep conversations, bold decisions, flawless logic. The next morning I woke up wearing one shoe, banned from a diner, and emotionally committed to a burrito I never bought. That's the magic of alcohol: it turns bad ideas into memories you don't remember but everyone else does.

Once when I was drunk, I tried to be subtle about it—slow walk, calm voice, thoughtful nodding. Meanwhile my breath smelled like a distillery fire and I was arguing with a chair because it "started it."

Thoughts on Step 2

Ladies and Gentlemen, I was privileged once in my life to have met Bill Wilson. It was in 1960, and I was with a national clergy conference on alcoholism, and we were there to learn something about the disease. And it was the first and only time that Bill had ever addressed that group, and he explained exactly what he meant by this. The insanity of the alcoholic is not the nutty things when he's drunk. You non-alcoholics do nutty things when you get drunk. The insanity of the alcoholic, according to Bill Wilson, is when the alcoholic is completely physically sober, and he picks up the first drink of the next series. That is totally irrational behavior. It is insane to choose to consume a drug that is killing you.

*"Father Joseph C. Martin,
12 Steps of AA with Fr. Martin*

Spotlight on Step 2

"Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity."

Step Two begins quietly, often with a question rather than a conviction. After admitting defeat in Step One, we are faced with a simple but life-changing possibility: maybe we do not have to do this alone. Step Two does not demand certainty, theology, or a fully formed faith. It asks only for openness—the willingness to believe that help beyond ourselves exists.

Many of us arrived in A.A. with damaged or discarded ideas about God. Some were angry, some doubtful, some convinced that faith had failed them. Step Two meets us exactly where we are. As the Big Book explains, all that is required is the belief that something greater than ourselves can restore us to sanity. That "something" begins to work the moment we stop insisting that we are the highest authority in our own lives.

Sanity, in this Step, means more than not drinking. It means relief from the obsession, the twisted thinking, and the emotional chaos that once ruled us. Step Two offers hope that our minds can be steadied and our lives re-ordered—not by force of will, but by trust.

This belief often grows slowly. It may begin with the group, the program, or the visible change in others who were once as hopeless as we were. Over time, belief becomes confidence, and confidence becomes faith grounded in experience.

Step Two is the bridge between despair and action. It assures us that recovery is not only possible—it is already underway the moment we become willing to believe.

Matt B.

AA 2nd Step Prayer

Heavenly Father,
I know in my heart that only you can restore me to sanity.
I humbly ask that you remove all twisted thought &
Addictive behavior from me this day.
Heal my spirit & restore in me a clear mind.

<https://www.aacle.org/twelve-step-prayers/>

Another prayer for Step 2 ...

Heavenly Father, You alone can restore me to wholeness; cleanse my mind of all distorted thoughts and free me from every bondage of addiction, that my spirit may be healed and my heart renewed in Your truth; through Jesus Christ, my Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Grapevine Daily Quote

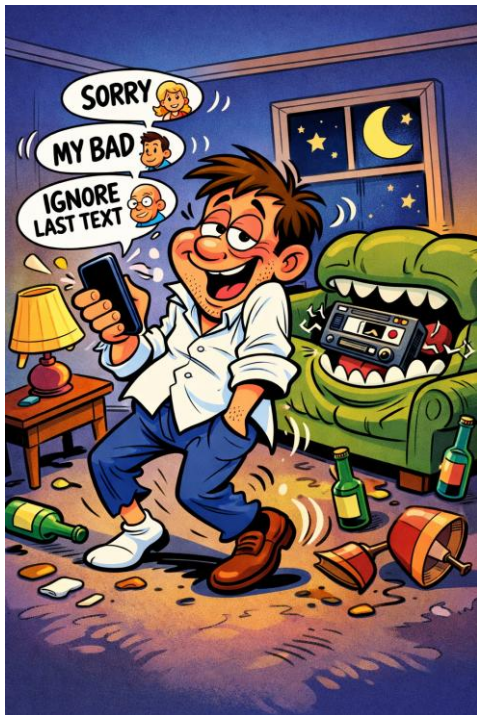
"All AA progress can be reckoned in terms of just two words: humility and responsibility."

AA Co-Founder, Bill W., January 1966, "The Guidance of AA's World Affairs", *The Language of the Heart*

I am responsible for my sobriety today. Knowing I cannot do it myself, I ask my HP for help. I find humility in the 10th step, where I find the good and bad things I may have done today, and act on those accordingly. I find humility in sharing what's troubling me at meetings and with my sponsor, while listening for suggestions. I find responsibility in service work and going to meetings when I don't want to. I am responsible for my sobriety, no one can take that away from me except me.

John G

Once when I was drunk, I thought I was being *low-key brilliant*. The evidence suggested otherwise: one shoe, three apologies texted to the wrong people, and a voicemail that sounded like I was being slowly eaten by furniture.



I tend to overthink everything (shocking for an alcoholic, I know), and Step 2 was no exception. At first, I thought it was some kind of magic switch I needed to flip in order to believe. It took me a while to hear and read other people's interpretations before I realized Step 2 is a process, not an instant fix.

I did not come to believe right away that a Power greater than myself could restore my sanity. I had to work through the steps, listen to the experience of those who had walked the path before me, and simply keep showing up. Step 2 began for me with a willingness to stick with the program and fellowship, and over time, I noticed I was no longer obsessing over alcohol, acting compulsively, or thinking only of myself.

Looking back, Step 2 was never about rushing to belief or having all the answers. It was about opening myself to the possibility that I did not have to face life alone. Today, that willingness continues to guide me, reminding me to pause, reach out, and trust in the shared experience and wisdom of the fellowship. Every small moment of sanity and peace is a reminder that this process really does work if I keep showing up.

Brandy C.



AA History in February

February 2:

1942: Bill Wilson paid tribute to Ruth Hock, AA's first paid secretary, who resigned to get married. She had written approximately 15,000 letters to people asking for help

Spirituality

October 1973

Spiritual Awakening and the Message Around the Tables

AROUND THE TABLES, we recite Step Twelve so often that sometimes we overlook what that divinely inspired statement says in clear language. The only "message" that it can be talking about is the "spiritual awakening." No other interpretation makes any sense.

Either we have a message to carry or we haven't. If we have, then we must have had a spiritual awakening. The unequivocal fact is that if we have truly worked on Steps One through Eleven, we will have experienced a change--no matter what we call it--that will cause others to want to be what we are demonstrating. Having had a spiritual awakening, we will stand out like a bright beacon atop the highest building of a city on a hill, as it is seen from desolate flatlands.

February 5:

1941: Pittsburgh Telegram ran a story on the first AA group's Friday night meeting of a dozen "former hopeless drunks."

February 8:

1940: Bill W., Dr. Bob, and six other AA's asked 60 rich friends of John D. Rockefeller Jr., for money at the Union Club, NY. They got \$2,000.
1940: Houston Press ran first of 6 anonymous articles on A.A. by Larry J.

February 9:

2002: Sue Smith Windows, Dr. Bob's daughter died.

February 10:

1922: Harold E. Hughes was born on a farm near Ida Grove, Iowa. After his recovery from alcoholism, he became Governor of Iowa, a United States Senator, and the leading dark horse for the Presidential Democratic nomination in 1972, until he announced he would not run. He authored the legislation which created the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, and other legislation to help alcoholics and addicts.

February 11:

1938: Clarence Snyder ("Home Brewmeister" in 1st, 2nd & 3rd editions) had his last drink.

February 12:

1945: World War II paper shortage forced reduction in size of the Big Book.

February 13:

1937: Oxford Groups "Alcoholic Squadron" met at the home of Hank Parkhurst ("The Unbeliever" in the 1st edition of the Big Book) in New Jersey.
1940: With about two years of sobriety, Jim Burwell ("The Vicious Cycle") moved to the Philadelphia area and started the first Philadelphia A.A. group.

February 14:

1971: AA groups worldwide held a memorial service for Bill Wilson.
2000: William Y., "California Bill" died in Winston Salem, NC.

February 15:

1918: Sue Smith Windows, Dr. Bob's adopted daughter, was born.
1941: Baltimore Sunday Sun reported that the city's first AA group, begun in June 1940, had grown from 3 to 40 members.

Tech Corner / Cyber Security Tips

Cybersecurity risks can hide inside ordinary websites. Consider an elderly man searching online for medication discounts. He clicks a link that promises "miracle savings" and asks him to enter his name, address, and Medicare number. This is a dangerous situation. Legitimate pharmacies do not ask for sensitive personal information through pop-up forms or unfamiliar websites. Warning signs include spelling errors, flashy promises, countdown timers, or requests for Social Security or Medicare details. To stay safe, he should stop immediately and close the page. A safer approach is to use well-known pharmacies or talk directly with his doctor or pharmacist. Cybersecurity safety often means slowing down. Before sharing any personal information online, ask: *Do I trust this source?* When in doubt, don't click, don't enter information, and seek help from a trusted person. Simple caution can prevent serious identity theft.

Matt B.

Grapevine Daily Quote

"Perhaps for some, 'How It Works' has become a tired, overworked bit of dogma, an opportunity to daydream. But not for this alcoholic. I get more out of those words with each passing day. The words don't change, but I do."

"'How It Works' Works for Me," Paradise, California, October 2003

'How It Works' is my reminder of what I should be doing. Honesty is mentioned multiple times in the first paragraph. It reminds me that the easier softer way may not work. It tells me what alcohol is and how devious it can be. It reminds me of my connection to a HP. The suggested Steps are something I ought to practice daily. It reminds me to not be hard on myself if I don't practice these principles perfectly, but to keep on working those as guides to progress. For this alcoholic, I need that reminder of what I should be doing to have a sober day, so I cannot afford to allow my mind to drift or become bored when 'How It Works' is read. The moment I find myself not paying attention, the door cracks open a bit to self-will.

John G

1946: AA Tribune, Des Moines, IA, reported 36 new members since Marty Mann had been there.

February 16:

1941: Baltimore Sunday Sun reported city's first AA group begun in 1940 had grown from 3 to 40 members, with five being women.

February 18:

1943: AA's were granted the right to use cars for 12th step work in emergency cases, despite gas rationing.

February 19:

1967: Father "John Doe" (Ralph Pfau), 1st Catholic Priest in AA, died.

February 20:

1941: The Toledo Blade published first of three articles on AA by Seymour Rothman.

February 21:

1939: 400 copies of the Big Book manuscript were sent to doctors, judges, psychiatrists, and others for comment. This was the "multilith" Big Book.

February 22:

1842: Abe Lincoln addressed the Washington Temperance Society in Springfield, IL.

February 23:

1959: AA granted "Recording for the Blind" permission to tape the Big Book.

February 24:

2002: Hal Marley, "Dr. Attitude of Gratitude," died. He had 37 years of sobriety. Hal testified, anonymously, before the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse on December 3, 1970.

February 26:

1999: Felicia Gizycka, author of "Stars Don't Fall," died. Born Countess Felicia Gizycka in 1905, she was the daughter of Count Josef Gizycki and Eleanor Medill Patterson. She married Drew Pearson in 1925 and divorced him three years later. She married Dudley de Lavigne in 1934, but the marriage lasted less than a year. In 1958 she married John Kennedy Magruder and divorced him in 1964. For most of her professional career, she went by the name Felicia Gizycka.

Step 2 Thoughts

Big Book p. 10, par. 3 "I had always believed in a Power greater than myself. I had often pondered these things. I was not an atheist. Few people really are, for that means blind faith in the strange proposition that this universe originated in a cipher and aimlessly rushes nowhere. My intellectual heroes, the chemists, the astronomers, even the evolutionist, suggested vast laws and forces at work. Despite contrary indications, I had little doubt that a mighty purpose and rhythm underlay all. How could there be so much of precise and immutable law, and no intelligence? I simply had to believe in a Spirit of the Universe, who knew neither time nor limitation. But that was as far as I had gone."

R., Linda, Joe and Charlie: The Big Book Comes Alive . UNKNOWN. Kindle Edition.

February 13, 1937 — The Oxford Groups "Alcoholic Squadron" Meets in New Jersey

On this date in 1937, members of the Oxford Groups' "Alcoholic Squadron" gathered at the New Jersey home of **Hank Parkhurst**, later known in the first edition of the *Alcoholics Anonymous* as "**The Unbeliever.**"

At this time, Alcoholics Anonymous did not yet exist as a separate fellowship. The small number of sober alcoholics in New York and Akron were still operating within the framework of the **Oxford Group**, drawing on its practices of confession, restitution, surrender, guidance, and service to others. The "Alcoholic Squadron" was an informal subgroup—alcoholics working specifically with other alcoholics, often meeting separately from the larger Oxford Group gatherings.

Hank Parkhurst's home served as a **safe and practical meeting place** for these men. Unlike broader Oxford Group meetings, these gatherings focused directly on the alcoholic

February 28:

1940: First organization meeting of Philadelphia AA was held at McCready Huston's room at 2209 Delancy Street.

Highlighting the 2nd Promise of AA:

"We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it."

For many of us, the past was a heavy burden when we arrived in A.A. Regret, shame, and guilt followed us everywhere. We replayed our mistakes, hurtful words, broken trust, and lost opportunities. Some of us wanted to erase the past entirely; others felt trapped in it, convinced it defined who we were and who we would always be. Promise Two offers a different outcome—one that feels almost impossible at first, yet proves true through lived experience.

As we work the Steps, the past is neither denied nor glorified. It is faced honestly, cleaned up where possible, and then put into its proper place. We begin to see that our experiences—painful as they were—can serve a purpose. They become sources of humility, compassion, and usefulness to others who still suffer. What once haunted us becomes part of the story we share to help another alcoholic feel less alone.

Not regretting the past does not mean approving of it. It means accepting that God can redeem even our worst moments. We no longer need to shut the door on yesterday, because it no longer threatens today. In recovery, the past becomes a teacher rather than a jailer, and freedom replaces remorse.

Matt B.

problem: sharing drinking histories, discussing spiritual change, and working with newcomers who had exhausted medical and moral solutions.

This meeting represents a **critical transition period** in AA history. Alcoholics were discovering—through experience rather than theory—that **one alcoholic working with another alcoholic** had a unique power no outside help could match. These home meetings helped shape the idea that recovery required identification, honesty, humility, and ongoing service, rather than preaching or moral pressure.

Within two years, the lessons learned in gatherings like this one would be distilled into the *Big Book*, and the alcoholics involved would formally separate from the Oxford Groups to form Alcoholics Anonymous. February 13, 1937 stands as a reminder that AA was born quietly—in living rooms, around kitchen tables—long before it had a name, a book, or a worldwide fellowship

Matt B.

An Ode to Sobriety

I used to think I had it wired,
A mind so sharp it never tired.
Turns out my "plan" was mostly fear,
And willpower just disappeared.
I swore I'd fix myself by will—
That theory failed. Repeatedly. Still.

Then came a thought, both small and strange:
What if I didn't run the change?
What if there's help beyond my head,
A wiser voice than what I said?
Not thunder, signs, or holy fire—
Just quiet hope that climbed up higher.

I borrowed faith before it grew,
From folks who said, "This worked for me too."
I didn't need to understand,
Just take the help, extend a hand.
If they were sane and once like me,
Maybe that power worked—maybe.

Spotlight on Tradition 2:

“For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern”

Tradition Two reminds us that **Alcoholics Anonymous** is not held together by personalities, titles, or control, but by a shared spiritual trust. From the beginning, A.A. rejected the idea of centralized authority or rigid leadership. Experience taught that alcoholics do not recover well under command—but they do respond to shared conscience and mutual respect.

The “group conscience” is not a vote driven by volume or influence. It is a careful listening—seeking guidance through patience, prayerful reflection, and honest discussion. When we pause long enough to hear one another, something greater than any single opinion begins to emerge. That is where Tradition Two points us.

This Tradition also protects us from the illusion of power. Trusted servants serve; they do not rule. Chairs rotate, roles change, and no one is indispensable. This keeps A.A. flexible, teachable, and safe from domination by ego or ambition.

Tradition Two teaches humility in practice. It asks us to trust the process, respect the group, and remember that lasting guidance does not come from authority imposed—but from wisdom shared. When we honor that principle, the group remains strong, and recovery remains possible for all.

Matt B.

Spotlight on Concept 2 of Service

Concept Two reminds us that in Alcoholics Anonymous, authority is always balanced by responsibility, and both are guided by spiritual principles rather than personal power. It states that the General Service Conference becomes the voice and conscience of the A.A. fellowship, acting on behalf of the groups in matters affecting A.A. as a whole.

So here I stand, not cured, not done,
But no longer fighting this alone.
I don't know how it all makes sense,
I just know chaos lost its fence.
I came to trust, not fully whole—
But sane enough to save my soul.

Now joy walks with me every day—
A clearer mind to light the way.

Matt B.

A Haiku to my Disease

Glass after glass fades,
Joy curdles into the night—
Chains clink in the dark.

A haiku to Sobriety!

First light breaks the grip,
Breath comes easy, truth stands firm—
One clear day begins.

A Devotion for the Christian in Recovery

Verse

Psalm 119:105 “Your word is a lamp to my feet, and a light for my path.” (WEB)

Meditation

In recovery, direction often matters more than distance. The psalm does not promise a floodlight that reveals the whole road ahead. It speaks of a lamp—enough light for the next step. Many of us once demanded certainty before moving forward, or rushed ahead without guidance at all. Recovery teaches a steadier way. God's word gives just enough light to walk honestly today. We are not asked to solve our entire future, only to follow what is made clear now. As we recover, trust grows step by step. The path becomes visible through obedience, not prediction. God's light keeps us from wandering back into darkness and helps us walk with care. Progress is not measured by speed, but by faithfulness to the light we have been given.

This Concept exists to solve a practical problem: millions of members and thousands of groups cannot all meet together to decide matters of common concern. The Conference provides a trusted way for group conscience to be expressed, heard, and acted upon—without creating a ruling body. Its authority is not absolute; it is delegated, limited, and always accountable to the fellowship it serves.

Concept Two teaches us that effective service depends on trust. The groups trust their representatives to listen carefully, seek spiritual guidance, and act with humility. In turn, those representatives trust the groups to remain engaged, informed, and supportive of A.A.'s common welfare.

This balance keeps A.A. from drifting into either chaos or control. It allows decisions to be made thoughtfully, prayerfully, and collectively, while preserving unity and safeguarding tradition.

At its heart, Concept Two affirms that A.A. works best when leadership is rooted in conscience, not command. When we trust one another and place principles before personalities, we ensure that A.A. remains spiritually grounded and ready to serve the alcoholic who still suffers.

Matt B.

Some suggestions for Meeting Topics

1. **Coming to Believe**
Step Two as the slow, honest awakening to hope beyond ourselves.
2. **A Power Greater Than Ourselves**
Letting go of definitions and allowing belief to grow naturally.
3. **Restoration to Sanity**
What “sanity” looks like in recovery—thinking, reacting, and choosing differently.
4. **From Desperation to Hope**
How Step Two begins to replace despair with possibility.
5. **God as We Understand Him**
Freedom of belief and the removal of spiritual barriers.
6. **Trusting a Loving Authority**
Tradition Two: “A loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience.”
7. **Group Conscience and Guidance**
Learning to trust collective wisdom rather than personal control.

This verse invites us to live in quiet trust, confident that God is shaping our hearts and guiding our steps toward what brings true joy.

Guiding God, whose word gives light for each step we take, lead us in the way we should go. Keep us faithful to the light You provide, guard us from wandering, and strengthen us to walk in trust and obedience; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Matt B.

Morning Prayer for Sobriety

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, for bringing me to the dawn of a new day. I pray that You would give me strength this day to remain sober and free from the temptation to drink. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Your will be done, and not my own. Amen.

Evening Prayer for Sobriety

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, for bringing me to the close of this day. I thank You for another day of sobriety, kept by Your grace and mercy. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Your will be done, and not my own. Amen.

8. **Leaders as Trusted Servants**

Tradition Two and the spiritual principle of service without domination.

9. **Letting Go of Old Ideas**

Step Two as willingness to release beliefs that no longer serve us.

10. **Fear Begins to Fall Away**

Promise Two — how belief brings emotional and mental stability.

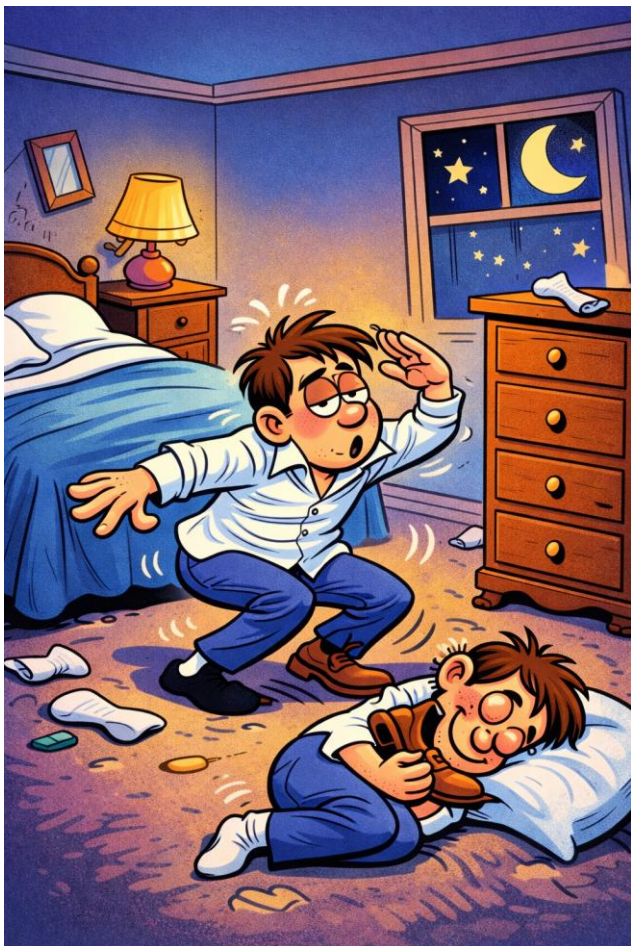
11. **Faith That Grows Through Action**

Belief strengthened by participation, not perfection.

12. **Hope as a Way of Life**

Living Step Two daily—trusting guidance, accepting help, and choosing sanity.

Once when I was drunk, I tried to sneak quietly into bed like a ninja—missed entirely, saluted the dresser, and fell asleep on the floor hugging my shoe like it was a rescue animal.



More Partially Coherent Ramblings

I don't have to outrun myself anymore. I spent years trying to escape discomfort by changing jobs, relationships, or routines, convinced the next place would finally feel right. What I'm learning now is that growth happens when I stay put long enough to be honest. The work follows me wherever I go, and that's not a curse—it's an opportunity. Today, I can stop searching for an easier place and start living more fully where I am. Peace isn't found somewhere else; it's built through presence and responsibility.

O God, help me remain present today instead of looking for escape. Give me the courage to do the work in front of me and the grace to accept where I am. Amen.

Matt B.

Living one day at a time in recovery means I've stopped treating my life like a pop quiz I didn't study for. I used to panic, guess wildly, and hope confidence would count as a correct answer. Now I just read the question labeled *today*.

My brain still loves to catastrophize for sport. It can turn a slow reply, a bad mood, or an empty calendar into a full-blown theory about my future demise. Recovery calmly shrugs and says, "Let's not narrate the apocalypse before lunch."

One day at a time also keeps me from emotional gymnastics. I don't need to stick the landing on every feeling or understand every reaction. I can wobble, regroup, stay sober, and move on without filing a report.

Living this way keeps me aligned with reality. I stay where my feet are, make decisions I can stand behind, and let time do its work. Sobriety holds because I don't outrun myself—I stay here and live this day well.

Matt B,

DO YOU HAVE AN UPCOMING EVENT OR A BIRTHDAY IN FEBRUARY, or are you interested in contributing an article to the newsletter? Please send any of the above to info@aa-district18.org, by JANUARY 21, being mindful of our Steps and Traditions. Any suggestions or comments are always welcome and appreciated, and may be sent to info@aa-district18.org !!!

THANK YOU for subscribing to our newsletter!!!

***Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done, on earth as it is in
heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass
against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power,
and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.***