



NH A.A. District 12 News

The Voice Within



UNWANTED AA Enemy #1 Resentment

If **Resentment** is noticed by yourself or others you are advised to:

1. Call your sponsor
2. go to an AA meeting
3. Ask for help

Failure to act can lead to loss of serenity and eventually, sobriety.



Resentment is the "number one" offender. It destroys more alcoholics than anything else. From it stem all forms of spiritual disease, for we have been not only mentally and physically ill, we have been spiritually sick. When the spiritual malady is overcome, we straighten out mentally and physically. (Alcoholics Anonymous, page 64)

Mental Poison

Mental poison is just as dangerous as whiskey
and very frequently the prelude to a drinking bout. . .
As I stay sober, I've come to prize my peace of mind and serenity above all else.
I dread scenes, I dislike contentious subjects,
and I even shun arguments that begin to show the slightest trace of acrimony.
For, although I'm sober, I know full well I'm only one drink away
from possible insanity.
And the surest way to get there is to cultivate such bedmates
as resentment and self-pity.

Thought to Ponder:

Resentment is like taking poison and waiting for the other person to die.

AA-related 'Alconym' . . .

H O P E = Heart Open; Please Enter.

District 12 NHAA Summer Outing

July 25, 2009: 8am – 6pm

Pawtuckaway State Park, Nottingham, NH

www.nhstateparks.org • No Pets

Friends & Family of AA Welcome!

BBQ, Swimming, Hiking, Biking, Fishing and more!

Visit www.aadistrict12.org under "Activities" for details or call Karen L. @ 603-361-2084

Advanced Purchase Tickets: \$15

Tickets Purchased Day of Event: \$20

Kids 12 & Under are FREE

For Tickets Call:

Scott @ 603-261-0987 or Tammy @ 603-289-8919

Other Upcoming District 12 Functions – Save the Dates!

- D12 Service Conference: September 12, 2009 – Grace Episcopal Church, Manchester, NH
- D12 Old Timer's Fall Dinner Dance: October 3, 2009 – Assumption Greek Church, Manchester, NH
- D12 Halloween Bash – October 31, 2009 – Helping Hands Center, Manchester, NH

Details and Flyers Will be Published Soon.

For more information, please call Jeannie B. (603-627-6801) or George B. (603-361-3283).

Something special was in the air on a late February Saturday morning in Manchester, NH. At first it seemed like every other day that I attend my home group, the best group in AA – 365 days a year at 6:30 am. I had no way of knowing that morning that my life would forever be changed by a wonderful woman from Peterborough, NH.

I love my group. They sustain me... But I find it especially joyous when out-of-towners come in to share; people I've never encountered before - and this woman – one of the sweetest, kindest, most lovely women I've ever come into contact with (besides my sponsor and Mother) would prove to be a special messenger from God. Placed right there on the west side of Manchester, like a beautiful Christmas gift just for me. No one had to tell me; I knew God orchestrated this, but how did I know?? I just did. My heart was full.

I was immediately drawn to her. She spoke of her experience, strength and hope as a gift she wished to share, and that she was obligated to share. That it was about truth. That it was about healing. She knew how to do it, and she was going to tell me how. It seemed that I was alone in the audience, and it was just the three of us - the magnificent woman, God and an oddly curious me.

You may be wondering who this woman is - what is her name? I could have asked our bookie or anyone else who clearly knew her since that day weeks ago; after all she was a well known woman to the old-timers in our group. But, I have not yet asked. There must be a reason. My sponsor always tells me I'm not driving the bus, so I figure I'll eventually be driven to a place where I'll ask the question or see her once more. I don't have a huge need to ask anything right now. I'll stay in the back seat and keep paying attention.

So my personal messenger is recalling her childhood, conveying her drunkalogue and beaming about early recovery. She then begins walking me through the steps. I'm mesmerized. All of a sudden I'm more than riveted. I'm on the edge of my seat and she is glowing. She is telling me what my problem has been for a long, long time. She explains God's will to me as it relates to Step 3. I did Step 3 a few times. I figured I was all set. I was cool with God. What was happening here? I knew I must listen carefully. I knew that it was coming, like that long awaited

rescue in *Cast Away* or the day Dorothy finally woke up in her bed at the end of the *Wizard of Oz*. It was the moment I was waiting for. **The Definition of God's Will:** if it is **Honest, Unselfish, Loving and Pure**. And if I should find that one of those pieces is missing – then it is my will. I realized then and there that I had been waiting for that answer to that prayer, that moment, on that day, in that chair from that woman. It clicked. It was a miracle. I understood so much and it was like I was transported to a beautiful new place. A Fourth Dimension I suspect.

Knowing this formula has helped me every single day and has changed my life in so many ways that I can't possibly tell you in this story. Another time perhaps. Another component to this story is what happened last Friday night at another meeting. I shared about this moment of learning what God's Will is and a fellow from the floor told me that on the flower pot next to Bill Wilson's grave the inscription reads: **Honest, Unselfish, Loving, Pure**. Come to find out these are called the **Four Absolutes** – created by the Oxford Group. It is an amazing thing to have this kind of history come to life in my little corner of it. I'm driven to learn more about all of this and visit Bill W's grave again soon. These beautiful gifts have brought enthusiasm to my life. A dear friend has told me that **enthusiasm** means – **God inspired. What a miracle to have enthusiasm today!**

If you are let down by these personal revelations of mine, please don't be disappointed. I can promise you that if you are as sick as I was, do what I did and just keep coming. Something as amazing as this was to me will definitely happen to you. It's a promise. I can't tell you how long it will take. It's God's promise. Just please believe me. And if you can't do that, just believe that I believe. What can it hurt?

I am not sure why I have not yet taken a ride to a meeting in Peterborough to find this most inspiring woman to thank her again. But you can be sure that God knows why. It's okay, too. I just haven't reached my bus stop yet. But I'm on my way. Keep coming until all of the miracles have happened. It's a blast!!!!

P.S. No matter what – just don't drink.

Anonymous

“Hello young man, it’s a pleasure to meet you”.

He had a stocky build and sparkling eyes topped with snow white hair. His large reddish cheeks were starkly contrasted by the black suit, black shirt and white collar. His wide open demeanor and strong handshake instilled a confidence of purpose and sense of being at one with all around him. This was my face to face introduction to Father Joseph Martin.

The date was May 15th, 1985 and I had just celebrated my first year sober anniversary. It had been a year full of life education. It was my good fortune to have worked at the Sobriety Maintenance Center’s Crisis Site for many months and I was now going to school and working as a night dorm supervisor at the Tirrell House on Brook Street in Manchester.

Kay Boisvert was the director at this man’s halfway house and my mentor. She was a truly inspirational person in her own right. One afternoon Kay asked if I was going to see Father Martin when he came to town. I replied that I could not afford the tickets and Kay just gave me that look (anyone who knew her can explain what that was like). When I arrived at Tirrell the next day two tickets were waiting in an envelope with my name on it.

I borrowed a suit that almost fit and asked my friend Marise to join me at the event. We enjoyed the walk from her home on the West side over to the Holiday Inn on Elm Street. We talked along the way about the impact Father Martin’s work had on so many lives. Mindful walking and discussions about sober living issues played a huge role in my early sobriety.

Startled by the number of people crowded into the conference room my thoughts centered on how many sober drunks there were in Manchester. The buzzing amongst those in attendance subsided as Father Martin stood to speak. A positive energy captivated the room and his personal sharing had us going from laughter to tears and back again.

We were sitting directly in front of Father and hanging on his every word. After all, this was the man who created “Chalk Talks on Alcoholism”, the tapes I had listened to so intently during my staff at CMC’s detox unit. The seeds he planted with these tapes remain with me to this day.

“An alcoholic is someone who’s drinking causes life problems; it is just that simple.”

“When drinking an alcoholic’s emotions take over their intellect. “E/I” ”.

“If you think you are a garbage can you are going to treat yourself that way. You will dump anything into yourself.”

As the night was drawing to a close Father Martin walked off the stage and over to our table. He had a way of

communicating that made one feel like they were the only one in the room. Eye contact was directly into my heart and touched me deeply. This was a truly decent human being.

It saddened me to hear of Father Martin’s recent passing. He left behind decades of work helping those who were lost and seeking to find their way. He was a true Shepherd in every sense of the word.

The following piece is from Farther Martin’s Web Site;

“On June 15, 1958, Father Martin entered Guest House in Lake Orion, Michigan, a treatment facility for the clergy. There, with the help and guidance of Austin Ripley and Dr. Walter Green, he began his own journey to recovery. After his experience at Guest House, Father’s life changed dramatically. He has gone on to touch the lives of millions of recovering alcoholics and addicts through his unique ability to educate on the disease”.

These paragraphs are from Father’s obituary in the Baltimore Sun;

“I drank from the age of 24 to 34,” he told *The Sun* in a 1992 profile. “I was afraid to go near the altar to say Mass six days a week. I did go on Sunday, but shaking all the while.” After his troublesome behavior came to the attention of superiors, Father Martin was confined to a psychiatric ward in California in 1956, and after his release, returned to drinking double martinis and shots of vodka from hidden bottles in his bathroom.

“It never occurred to me that perhaps there was something odd about a priest walking toward a garbage dump in the middle of the afternoon carrying two suitcases of clanking bottles,” he told *The Sun* in an interview last year. Finally, the Archdiocese of Baltimore sent Father Martin to Guest House, a Michigan treatment center for the clergy, to get sober. By the time he left Guest House, he had regained his sobriety and found what would become his life’s work.

He converted his notes based on Bill Wilson’s Alcoholics Anonymous famous 12-step program into a blackboard talk, which was done on an actual blackboard with chalk. During the 1960s, he began presenting it at AA meetings, rehab centers and private businesses.

In 1972, his “Chalk Talk” lecture was filmed by the Navy and later was picked up by the other armed forces where it was used as mandatory addiction training for service personnel. Father Martin and his blackboard lecture were in demand all over the world, which gave rise to his crack: **“Have chalk. Will travel.”**

Father Martin, who liked to say, “Give me a blackboard, a piece of chalk and a bunch of drunks and I’m at home,” always greeted new arrivals with a hopeful welcome:

“The nightmare is over.” It is just that simple! ALK

On May 16th of this year I celebrated my 29th anniversary of continuous sobriety in Alcoholics Anonymous. The term celebrated seems inappropriate because the event would not have appeared to be a celebration of any conventional sort to most people. I went about my day as I do most days, beginning the day in prayer, spending the first hour drinking coffee and discussing all things with my spouse, applying myself to my job, going to a meeting, watching a little TV, and going to bed by 10PM. The kind of day that I used to consider the height of boredom, but that I have come to cherish in AA. What differentiated this day of my anniversary was what went on in my head. *I spent much of the day reflecting gratefully on what had transpired over the past 29 years, and considering how the grace of God and the support of fellow alcoholics had enriched my life beyond my wildest dreams.*

I thought about how the people of the fellowship had taken me in and encouraged me, even when I thought I was smarter and better than them or when I was certain that their program was too “boy scout” for one as enlightened as me. They asked for nothing and seemed to genuinely care about me getting better. I was immediately struck by the honest way they shared their experience, strength and hope.

I once heard a catholic priest state that prophets are not old people with beards that lived long ago, but they are people who tell the truth and they are all around us. I think prophet is an apt title for many of the people I have met in AA. They are the many in AA who hold firmly to the principles and calmly speak the truth, a truth that most of the world does not want to hear. The truth that I initially heard in AA was not welcome news to me. That truth included the following points (which were very threatening to me and my value system):

- If I was an alcoholic (and the case was pretty compelling) I could never drink in safety. This included weekends, holidays, weddings, etc. It seemed to me an extreme approach.

- I possessed a body that could not tolerate alcohol and a mind I could not trust. My mind was a double agent, it had convinced me it was my best friend while at the same time it was orchestrating my alcoholic demise.

- On my own I was no match for the disease of alcoholism. This disease has taken down smarter and better people than me. If I wanted to change

my life I needed to do what I most despised, join and participate in a support group.

- I needed to undertake a personal recovery process as outlined in the twelve steps of AA. My approach to life had not worked. I needed a new approach, one that was proven to work for alcoholics.

- I would need to begin doing business with a higher power. Not having a higher power equals playing God and I had played God poorly for too long.

Having applied (sometimes) the wisdom of AA to my life in the form of action for some time, I am astounded and humbled by the results. ***The rewards appear to be disproportionate to the effort expended.*** I find myself being comfortable in my own skin, capable of dealing with all life situations, aware of my limitations, grateful for my life (such as it is at any point in time), and aware of God’s unlimited healing power.

I believe that I am in a constant battle with my disease for my life. My disease continues to want me back and is tenacious in its pursuit of my soul. Therefore it is critical that I have as much knowledge of my adversary as possible. Below is some of what I have learned about my disease and its tactics.

My disease:

- Is not impressed with the quality of my sobriety

- Wants me to be impressed with the quality of my sobriety

- Never takes a vacation, or a break

- Knows my character defects better than I do

- Knows how to exploit my character defects

- Wants to separate me from the recovery process and isolate me

- Uses my intellect to confuse me

- Detests honesty and all spiritual actions

- Has extraordinary patience and determination

The good news is that the program of AA, vigorously applied, can overcome this insidious foe. **I realize today that the recovery process was everything that I needed but nothing that I would have chosen. I am truly blessed.**

Bob O

