



The Voice Within

NH AA District 12 Newsletter

February 2012

Building a New Foundation

It's 2012, and the new year has begun to unfold. Whether you've just sat down in the halls for the first time or have been active in AA for years, it's a time of focusing on program basics: Don't Drink, Go to Meetings, and Ask for Help. Trust God, Clean House, and Help Others. In recovery, we set about changing our way of life through the Twelve Steps, but it doesn't mean we always leap joyfully into the process- one important reason to have a sponsor who's already worked the steps.

This issue of *The Voice Within* features articles about change. Guy C. explores how we as alcoholics view and deal with different kinds of change. Grateful Don recounts a sponsor's effort to change a sponsee's attitude about the deadly disease of alcoholism. As you read, think about what is different in *your* life as a result of recovery. Send your comments, questions, and stories to the editor at voicewithinnews@gmail.com. The deadline for inclusion in the April issue, which will focus on the third and fourth steps, is March 15th. - Cathy



CHANGES AHEAD!

Boredom presents a real and insidious peril for those exposed to this condition for an extended period of time. It will lead to brooding, irritability, and a general feeling of malaise: the thrill has gone out of life and the daily task of living becomes dull. For this reason, God (as you understand Him / Her) invented CHANGE. If any word strikes more fear in the hearts of alcoholics than "boredom", then "change" has it beat hands down.

It is easy to overlook (even in a state of boredom) that change is happening around and inside us at a dizzying rate. Each day we grow a little older, our ideals and outlooks modify (whether we realize it or not), and our life choices diminish. We would like to believe that we can control changes and outcomes and to an extent, that is true, however, there is (as always) a catch. Change may occur in two fashions:

1. The self-induced change (conscious decision)
2. The involuntary or unanticipated change

We all make conscious decisions each day. These decisions all involve a degree of "change" to our lives. At this point, we enter into the domain of comfort level. One

example would be the simple decision to **NOT** forget your significant other's birthday or anniversary. You have, at this point, changed an outcome. Your remembrance is well taken, the small gift is well received, and you have averted a week (or more) of...shall we say, discomfort. In these decisions / changes, we have a degree of control .

There are, however, decisions that will trigger profound life changes. As alcoholics, we agonize, rationalize and procrastinate over these. We do this for a good reason; they are frightening. Often, several choices may be at hand, but, *which one is the correct one?*

We all want to do the right thing. Serious decisions which will bring about equally serious life changes should be made in a state of calm reflection, requesting humbly for the guidance of one's Higher Power and perhaps with the assistance of a sponsor. For we all know that it is not the decision that we fear - it is the outcome and the changes - be they comfortable or uncomfortable -that it will bring into our lives.

We also, through daily practice, trial and error, choose to bring about changes in our personal behavior (character defects). These changes are frustrating and gradual; however, with a close accord with our Higher Power we can all achieve the "progress, not perfection" we so humbly seek. Each day brings new opportunities, experiences, and again, change.

Some of these changes are the unanticipated variety- the second kind. Unexpected changes also produce different comfort levels. We can be serene about the changes, or we can be terrified. The comfort level associated with winning a lottery will, of course, be considerably different from that of losing one's job or dealing with a serious illness. We all are inclined to label changes as "good" or "bad".

A different approach could be taken. Rather than refer to the changes as good or bad, perhaps considering these changes as "interesting" would start us off on a better footing. These serious changes can be viewed as challenges and opportunities for growth. Responding to changes, (especially the serious ones) will require us, again, to be calm of spirit, to maintain a close conscious contact with our Higher Power through the Steps, and to consult often with our sponsors. The result will be an enhanced ability to cope with and learn from these changes.

As always, changes and however we deal with them present opportunities for spiritual growth and a positive life. This growth and the benefits brought about by the change may not be apparent at the time; however, they are there. We need but to look a little more closely. The difficulties we work through and resolve and the experience we gain from them will nurture us and offer us guidance in the face of future trials.

So, then, we should embrace and rejoice in change as an opportunity to grow. This growth and newfound experience becomes shared as we now find that our awakenings and realizations will assist those members of the Fellowship experiencing similar circumstances.

Be at peace, strive for happiness.

Guy C

What Would You Like Me to Say?

We go to the wakes and funerals of many alcoholics in our lives who have died (or as Emmet Fox refers to it, received their “divine promotion”). Some die drunk, some die dry, and some die sober with the disease of alcoholism, not from the disease of alcoholism.

We also go to the wakes and funerals of non-alcoholics because we know an alcoholic who is either a family member or friend of the deceased. We stand in line and offer condolences after identifying ourselves to these ‘strangers’ as friends of Bill, or Bob, or someone close to the family. In reality, we are there in support of our friends, members of our AA family.

Conversations we have with each other on these occasions take on many directions. The guy who died fully consumed by the disease prompts discussion such as, “Poor bastard, he never fully surrendered,” or “As the Big Book says, he was one of those who were constitutionally incapable of being honest with themselves,” or, sadly, “The last time I saw him he made ‘pitiful and incomprehensible demoralization’ an apt description of his life.”

Then we have those who died sober. We recall fondly how their ability to “carry the message” had such an impact on many of our lives. We were blessed with their sponsorship and their love of AA’s three legacies of Unity, Recovery, and Service. Their adherence to AA’s way of living and their example of ‘practicing these principles in all their affairs’ set the example for our path of recovery. They understood that “the spiritual life is not a theory; we must live it.” We wanted what they had- the joy of living.

Now comes the real purpose of this article. I was sponsoring a guy who had reached the point in his recovery where he was working one on one with others. He was frustrated and saddened by a chronic relapser who would “get it” a little bit, and then fall back into the dark depths of the disease of alcoholism. He wanted to know exactly what to say to the sufferer that would get him to surrender and stay that way. He had quoted from the Big Book, he had related messages that he had heard in the halls, he had prayed with him with some success, but still the disease prevailed.

I passed on to him an approach that I had seen work. “Try this. The next time the alcoholic comes back and is lucid, ask him exactly what he would like you to say at the casket in the funeral home when his four year old son squeezes your hand and tearfully asks, ‘Why did my daddy have to die? What happened to that daddy who told me he loved me and would always be there for me? Who is going to care for me?’”

Today, some years later, I am grateful for the fact that both of these gentlemen are enjoying a sober life. They have enhanced my sobriety because someone said, “What would you like me to say?”

Grateful Don, OVER FIFTY GROUP

UPCOMING EVENTS

*Sunday, February 19th - District 12 Meeting, 6-8 pm,
St. Raphael's Church, Ferry St, Manchester*

*Sunday, March 18th - District 12 Meeting, 6-8 pm.
St. Raphael's Church, Ferry St., Manchester*

*Thursday, March 22nd - Original Happy Hour West Anniversary, 5:30-7:30 pm,
St. Andrew's Church Hall, 100 Main St, Manchester*

*Saturday, March 24th - Pre-Conference NH Area Assembly Meeting, 8 am – 4 pm
Mary Queen of Peace Church, 200 Lawrence Rd, Salem*

*Tuesday, March 27th - Pathway to Sobriety Anniversary, 6-8 pm,
South Main St. Church, 301 S Main St., Manchester*

*Fri., March 30th - Sun., April 1st - NH AREA ASSEMBLY ANNUAL CONVENTION
North Conway Grand Hotel at Settler's Green,
72 Common Court, North Conway, NH 03860 Ph: 800.655.1452
Call the hotel before March 2nd to get the group room rates.
Area Functions Committee Email: functions@nhaa.net
See the Area Website nhaa.net in March for the program!*

*Saturday, April 28th - District 12 Spring Fling,
Parish of the Transfiguration, Kelley St, Manchester
Italian Dinner, Speakers, Raffles, DJ. Tickets \$20.*

New Meeting! This meeting is so new, it doesn't have a name yet. Thursday Evening at the VA from 7 -8. Format is topic/discussion. This is an open meeting.

“Half measures availed us nothing. We stood at the turning point. We asked His protection and care with complete abandon.” Alcoholics Anonymous (59)

**“Even if you're on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there.”
- Will Rogers**