



The Voice Within

NHAA District 12 Newsletter June 2014

Every river has a wellspring at its source. AA is like that, too. In the beginning, there was a spring which poured out a clergyman, Dr. Samuel Shoemaker. Way back in 1934 he began to teach us the principles and attitudes that afterward came the full flower of AA's Twelve Steps for Recovery. Bill W. (Grapevine 09/57)

Cover, Uncover, Recover, Discover, Recovery

Recently at a meeting, I heard a speaker make a comment discussing the above words. I realized that this would be a topic for a Voice Within Issue. It has to do with the word recovery, and the many off shoots that come from this word. The root word of recovery is recover. This was followed by the word cover. The intransitive verb for the word cover means to conceal something, usually followed by the word up. Little did I realize that while active I was covering up the deeper rooted causes of my alcoholism, then only to realize that in recovery I needed to uncover what I had been covering up, to discover the solution that has been freely given to me.

Sounds confusing, though not when applied to the 12 steps of recovery. The more I work the steps as they are drafted, the more I am able to discover what I have been covering up along this path called recovery. I want to thank Lewis K. and Maggie N. for their articles, and look forward to be able to publish more. Yours in service, Richard S.

Writing for Cover

I pulled the covers away from my eyes and rubbed them in an attempt to recover from yet another tough night only to discover a pamphlet on the night table that read places to see in Tijuana, what looked like \$50,000 in cash strewn across the bed cover and a woman with a cover-up sash that said Miss Mexico 1994. Alright, now that I've got your attention, your trusted editor asked me to write an article using the base word cover

Recovery

I find that my recovery from the causes and conditions of alcoholism is a very slow and often times what seems like a glacial process. However, if I am realistic in giving things a full and accurate assessment, things have been moving along incredibly well and I have gained the trust and respect of my family and the community at large.

For the years preceding the gift of sobriety I certainly didn't have much hope. A lot of my story is going through the homes for the very, very, very, very nervous. Before AA I figure my life would consist of living in my Mom's basement, being hospitalized every few years, barely able to hold a job and maybe finish every other college course I tried to take. I would be the subject at family gatherings that relatives would avoid.

So, I found myself at my first AA meeting toward the end of 1978 in a foreign land south of here called New Jersey. I didn't say I was an alcoholic, recite the Lord's Prayer or fill a coffee cup up more than halfway for about three months. But I slowly discovered that I could identify with this bunch of alcoholics which is what kept me coming.

The term the gift of desperation applied. Early in the game the gentleman who was to become my sponsor told me some guy nudged him and said look at this guy he's never going to make it he's too sick. My sponsor responded by saying that some people bet on horses, but he bets on people and that if this guy keeps coming to meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous nobody's hopeless. That's my story.

I joined a group and started to get active. If I look back that is the one most important thing – activity. People started to get to know me and saw that I was serious about getting sober and they more than met me halfway. I am very grateful for that.

Hardcover Book

I guess we all have people along the way that influence and shape our sobriety. One of mine was a guy they called Bud the Book. This guy could quote a semicolon from pretty much any of the AA literature.

Bud taught me early in the game that you will hear a lot of well-intentioned advice in AA, but it's not AA. He would say that he could go to the bar up the street and get advice. He suggested I become familiar with the literature and test what I would hear at meetings against what AA is trying to say. He was one of the AA characters that I admired.

Rediscoveries

I had the opportunity to move to New Hampshire in 1984 to go to law school which was a goal of mine before I started drinking. I applied to fourteen schools and one accepted me after an interview. That one was in Concord, NH.

So, I moved up to NH with five years of sobriety. I tried not to miss a beat as I joined a group, got a sponsor and got active.

In my third year of law school I was able to do a semester away and study at Beijing University. From being in a self-imposed locked room for about six months to a wondrous land halfway around the world. Don't tell me this program doesn't work.

Visiting China in 1986 was an incredible experience. Mind you this was before the internet, cell phones and the Red Sox winning a World Series after 1918. So, after calling the General Service Office in NY. I was told that there was one other alcoholic they were aware of in China and no meetings.

I put a note on the bulletin board where I was staying, a kind of hotel/dormitory, asking if anyone was a friend of Bill Wilson. Sure enough I got a knock on the door and it was a young guy living one floor below me from Connecticut with less than one year of sobriety fearful of taking the trip.

About an hour later I got another knock on the door from a woman that said she was also a friend of Bill Wilson. Wow my good fortune. She said that she had been canoeing with him last summer in St. Louis. I thanked her and told her to beat it.

This guy from CT and I had a meeting at breakfast every day, told our stories in front of the 40-foot statue of Chairman Mao and kept a meeting going at the International School when the guy running it returned to the states.

My plan was to graduate and move back to the New York City area. But then I met a woman and all bets were off.

The marriage didn't work, but we had a son who is now twenty-five. Because of AA and great sponsors I have been able to be a sober Dad which I consider the greatest benefit I have received from AA– the ability to be a sober parent.

I have had the privilege of being involved in my son's school, sports and life. I received a home-made birthday card from my son a few years ago, which said in part, that he wanted to thank me for the love, wisdom and guidance I have given him over the years. I want to thank AA, good sponsors and you people for the same.

Continual Discoveries

I am very thankful that there is no graduation from AA as I need it now as much as ever. Through the fellowship and the program within the fellowship I am continually discovering and uncovering and covertly finding and trying not to stay under the covers (OK that last one was a stretch, but want to throw in as many cover-words as possible here at the tear-jerking finish), things about myself. Some I really don't want to see, but people and my sponsor point out my charming idiosyncrasies that the program calls character defects and shortcomings.

So hopefully for me I am doing the AA waltz – two forward and one back. It is easy to lose site of the big picture so that's why exercises like this, being involved in the fellowship and trying to give a little back to the new guy is life saving and a defense against picking up the first drink. Thank you. Lewis K

Recovery.....It starts with a moment....a thought.....a temporary reprieve. The next step is just that, a step, not metaphorically but physically...take a step, and a deep breath. I find that to mean, finding clarity. First you must do what you may deem the impossible....extract the poison. Learn to walk, instead of just taking steps. Walk through the journey you were so afraid to face. Clear your mind and look yourself in the mirror, stare at it, learn it, embrace it...it's you. Recovery is about loving yourself, learning about yourself.....it is your unmasking. There is a life waiting for you....it all starts with a moment. Maggie N.

A Well Disguised Blessing

WHEN WE STOP DRINKING, what a fascinating world we uncover! The mixed horrors and delights of discovering what we really are; that road back that at times is a road forward. The gradual lessening of remorse; the easing of despair as yet another day without the old prop passes in peace. The joy of intelligent conversation; the pleasure of reading a book the way the author intended it to be read. The delight, surely unsurpassed in human emotion, of wanting to be with people, of being interested in them and their doings, of seeing the soul of them shining from their eyes; the nice things we can suddenly do for them. The wonderful naiveté that begins to replace our former unhappy cynicism. The superiority of responding to stimulus intellectually instead of emotionally. The thrill of thinking before speaking and the way time sorts itself out each day.

The heart's-ease of always feeling that each day is not long enough; of sleeping with a still mind; of being able to shed a tear through joy, not sorrow. The convenience of always having a shilling or two for life's intrinsics. The awareness of the beauty of a spring morning; the comfort of always having somewhere to go--or something to do; of being able to find calm and contentment. Of actually thinking how other lonely poor souls are getting through their day--their night--and wishing them the peace of your mind.

It has been truly said that what the Creator gives with one hand He takes with the other. In our case, how immeasurably we gain if that is so. How our values change! Alcoholism, a curse? Surely calling it a blessing would be a better definition. P.N. (Tom Tom) Grapevine 05/57

All issues of The Voice Within are sponsored through the 7th Tradition.

Length and Format: The newsletter may publish works of different lengths, from snappy one-liners and one-paragraph anecdotes, to full page articles (500-1000 word count). Text or attachments sent by e-mail should be submitted in word. Handwritten text can be delivered to myself, or your GSR, who can deliver them to the next district meeting. Articles are reviewed, selected, and edited by the editorial team. The contents appropriateness is at the sole discretion of the newsletter committee.

Deadline for the August issue is July 25th.

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