

THE VOICE WITHIN



Alcoholics Anonymous - District 12
Newsletter – October 2018

VIGILANCE

We have seen the truth demonstrated again and again: "Once an alcoholic, always an alcoholic." Commencing to drink after a period of sobriety, we are in a short time as bad as ever. If we are planning to stop drinking, there must be no reservation of any kind, nor any lurking notion that someday we will be immune to alcohol.

Alcoholics Anonymous, p. 33

LEST WE BECOME COMPLACENT

It is easy to let up on the spiritual program of action and rest on our laurels. We are headed for trouble if we do, for alcohol is a subtle foe.

Daily Reflections, October 1

Serving the towns of: Bedford, Goffstown, Hooksett, Manchester and New Boston

Constant Vigilance— Alcoholics Anonymous is a program of action. Don't drink, ask for help, go to meetings, trust God, clean house, help others.



WITHOUT RESERVATIONS

When I was first introduced to this fellowship, I had reservations aplenty. I felt as though I was not like any of you... Ya Right! I had a job and lots of "stuff". I just had to put away

the "dry" goods and learn how to drink. You guys didn't drink... say what! There was no need for a sponsor or the Twelve Steps, I just needed to control my drinking...Ya right!

Needless to say, these attitudes led me to my first resentment. It seems that I kept hearing these suggestions, suggestions I didn't need. Shortly thereafter I set out to show you what for. King Alcohol soon had his way. Of course, denial helped me to justify everything. I floundered with this for almost two decades, fully aware that I was/am an alcoholic.

Entering my first detox sent me back to the halls. Still, I had reservations, and relapsed. Second detox, my last prayer to God, led me to today. Today I am powerless, I am being restored to sanity and I get out of His way. Today I believe, because I've been beaten into a sense of reasonableness, and that sobriety takes work. Every day! Today, if I do what I did yesterday, I'll receive that unwarranted gift of SOBRIETY!

Yours in service, Paul P

Half measures availed us nothing

STEP 10, TWELVE & TWELVE, PAGE 92

Now that we're in A.A. and sober, and winning back the esteem of our friends and business associates, we find that we still need to exercise special vigilance. As an insurance against "big-shot-ism" we can often check ourselves by remembering that we are today sober only by the grace of God and that any success we may be having is far more His success than ours.



Hungry, Angry, Lonely, Tired

Sponsorship is Important – Pain is the touchstone of all growth – how well do you want to get?

How have I stayed sober 22 years? Watching others relapse and acknowledging we cannot rest on our laurels. Applying the principles of the program to my life is what works for me. It's important to have a sponsor when sponsoring others, but also, it's not wise to be without a sponsor in AA. When I am asked to work with a newcomer, I don't hesitate to walk away if she's not ready. The effort is 80% from the sponsee, and 20% from the sponsor. A sponsorship relationship is one of intimacy and the sponsor must be without fear of speaking up, but to speak the truth with love. I am not responsible how it's taken, but I am responsible to speak the truth to the sponsee, as I have her best interest at heart. We have compassion. It's about doing the work. Hang with the winners. Many stop at Step 4, but that is really where you truly look at yourself. That is where we see our strengths, our weaknesses, and identify our character defects and what to do about them. It's where the rubber hits the road. I want to grow and learn. I have a routine every day: I have coffee with God, I say the 3rd and the 7th Step prayers, and I go about my day. I come to a place of pause when agitated or uncertain and I don't make impulsive decisions. If you feel compelled, *don't*; if you feel moved, *act*; if you feel confused, *wait*. I quote Psalm 139: [23](#)Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. [24](#)See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Judy M.

Sobriety date: 1/1/1996

vig·i·lance

Definition: State of being on the alert, as for danger or error; watchfulness, wariness

Synonyms: Diligence, carefulness, attentiveness.

We stood at the turning point

TWO OF OUR MEMBERS TALK OF THEIR EXPERIENCES WITH RELAPSE

The Relapse - from the hand reaching out for help - Cunning, Baffling and Powerful is Our Disease

ANDY

With 11 years sober and 2 1/2 years clean, I've had my share of challenges with staying the course. Although I have had my share of relapses during this journey. I've always returned to the halls, got right back in the saddle and moved forward. I recently received a text from a person of the past, and it triggered a romance that was very powerful and debilitating. My disease had me thinking of picking up, it had me debating whether to meet up with this person, it had me in the throes of complete confusing and chaos in my head. For a month all I could think about was "should I" or "shouldn't I" — it was brutal! I knew what the right thing to do was. But my disease had me. I was then going to be home alone for 3 days before I joined my family for some vacation time on the Cape. The power of this disease was incredible. It was owning me. It was in total control, it had me in a mental relapse mode like never before. My one thing to do prior to heading down to meet up with my family was to mow the lawn, something I've done hundreds of times. But this time, because of the debate going on in my head, the endless text messages back and forth. "Hey"... "What's Up"... "OK"... "No, I can't, busy now"... "Free now"... "Have to do some chores"... "How much"... "You still around?"... Absolute Insanity! I was literally paralyzed. I couldn't

move. I was not able to focus long enough to just "mow the lawn", I just sat and stared at my phone. I was texting back and forth, romancing it, planning it and getting ready to hook up. I was doing everything wrong. I wasn't using a single tool in my bag, I was letting my disease win.

Off I went, to meet up, at least that's what my disease wanted. As I drove, texting, sweating, on the verge of panic, I quickly pulled into a 7-11, only 2 blocks away. I quickly blocked the number and called a buddy in the program; some sense of reality had finally entered my mind. My Higher Power was watching over me. I told him what was going on, voice broken. I explained my pain. His initial response was, "You're kidding me." He had no idea, seeing only how well I was doing on the outside, not knowing how I was doing on the inside. As I've learned in the past, and I try to do on a daily basis, pick up the phone and talk with another alcoholic. It's our daily reprieve, our constant communication with others that will help us *Stay The Course*. I went to a meeting that night, as I always do and have since and doubled them up, morning and evening. As I look back at this past experience, and my program, I have identified areas that were lacking. I talk with my sponsor, I get on my knees every day, put my hand out to others, and I ask for help. 'It's one day at a time' and I only have today. I know if I stay around long enough, and do the work, "The Miracle Will Happen" :)

We asked His protection and care with complete abandon

The Relapse - from the hand reaching out to those who ask for help – How can we extend our hand to those who have fallen by the wayside.

BILL

Alcoholics drink, that we do. The program (12 steps) and the fellowship (the group) are ways to ensure that I don't pick up that first drink. Unfortunately, it is my experience that many alcoholics do drink again after getting sober, however, that has not been my personal experience and I am truly grateful. Yes, I and my group need to always keep extending our hand to those who do drink again because the book tells me, I must. That's the insurance for long term sobriety. We are not doctors, not lawyers, this is not a vocation for us, we must do this to stay sober ourselves. People die from this disease every day, that is the fact. I cannot personalize it if someone I sponsor or somebody in the group relapses. My and the group's purpose is to bring the program and fellowship, lay out the spiritual tools for inspection, and God is in charge after that. We are truly blessed.

GROUPS LOOKING FOR SUPPORT

Women's Daytime Group Gethsemane Lutheran Church 65 Sagamore St, Manchester Friday, 12:30 pm-1:30 pm	Queen City Group First Congregational Church 508 Union Street, Manchester Friday, 8:00 pm-9:15 pm
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ANNOUNCEMENTS

THANKSGIVING DAY TRADITION – GRATITUDE MEETING - On Thanksgiving morning 11/22/18 at 6:30-8:00 am, the First Light of Day Group dispenses with its regular format of a Big Book meeting. In its place is a Tradition/Gratitude meeting with an extended time span of 1 ½ hours. St. Raphael's, 100 Ferry St, Manchester.

Pizza party – 10/12/18 6:30-8:00 pm (fellowship), 8 pm-9:00 pm meeting. Food donations welcome -Queen City Group, First Congregational Church, 508 Union Street, Manchester

Showtime! The 3rd Sunday of each month at 11:30 am, meetings will be held in the Elliot Hospital Cafeteria to plan plays.

ALCATHON – Christmas Eve 12/24/18 at 6 pm through Christmas Day 12/25/18 at 6 pm, St. Raphael's Church, 100 Ferry St, Manchester Planning meeting Thursday, 10/19/18 6:30 pm at St. Raphael's - Lottery to pick meeting slots at District meeting Sunday, 10/21/18 6 pm-8:00 pm.

Men needed for commitment for federal halfway house – must pass background check. Contact Luke (603) 300-9136

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.
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