

▲ The Unselfish Spirit

Accepting the World as It Is, *By Rick R.*

Our primary purpose is to stay sober and to help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety. The degree that the individual carries out these two goals is not mandated by the AA body and the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking.

The AA program offers suggestions on how to overcome the difficulties brought about by the disease of alcoholism and not simply the act of drinking. These difficulties come in the form of spiritual damage and

material wreckage.

It seems that our spiritual damage lies in the unseen part of our makeup such as, our thinking, our motive, our fears, our conscience, our ego, guilt, shame, self-esteem, and the like.

Our material wreckage often comes as the result of our spiritual damage and is the residue of our spiritual condition - selfishness and self-centeredness! That, we think is the root of our trouble (p 62 BB).

Suggestions For The Holidays & Sobriety

1. Keep busy by revisiting your To-Do list of activities around the house.
2. Zoom is not just for AA meetings. Be host to family and friends and catch up with one another.
3. Keep your AA telephone list with you at all times.
4. Avoid gatherings and skip any drinking occasion you are nervous about.
5. Worship in your own way.
6. Don't sit around brooding.
7. Don't start now getting worked up about all those holiday temptations.
8. Enjoy the true beauty of holiday love and joy.
9. Practice the Twelfth Step.



Warmest Thoughts and Best Wishes for a Wonderful Holiday
And Happy New Year...

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That, being said, isn't it apparent that unselfishness would be the solution to our trouble? That seems to oversimplify the solution but, in my experience, it is so simple that it is usually overlooked. Most alcoholics have spent their lives taking advantage of everything and everyone around them and as the result, have been plagued by the guilt and shame that only a drink could mask.

The program of Alcoholics Anonymous suggests that we live by principles, and I cannot find one selfish principle in the Big Book or the 12&12. I believe that most of the people who truly have a desire to stop drinking and embrace the AA program start to change their behaviors.

They recognize it as counterproductive simply because they can hear the things we all share at meetings, and they change the most obvious shortcomings in their day-to-day activities. This is a good start. And with time, it starts to erode much of the shameful habits of past that had become commonplace.

Talk of inventories and amends cause us to think at a different level about those material matters. That is usually the only thing that we are aware of in the beginning. When we talk about spiritual matters, it seems that we all have different perceptions of exactly what we mean by "spiritual".

If, for the sake of simplicity, we think of it as our innermost self, such as our ego, conscience, our mind, our heart, or soul, if you like, and realize that this is where our spirit resides and where our emotions live. And, that is also where the pain of our past thrives.

If we want to achieve the peace of mind that is promised in step nine, we will have to come to terms with the process of acceptance of the world as it is and of the people in that world. If we want to be accepted and forgiven for our past mistakes, we must be willing to accept all the people that we find fault with and give

them the same latitude that we are seeking.

To accomplish this, we can stop being judgmental and replace that with an understanding spirit. We will have to replace gossip and character assassination with compassion and empathy. If we can't do that, then how can we expect the world around us to accept us and forgive us for our past mistakes? This is no time to rest on our laurels, so to speak.

It's time to begin cleaning out the attic. This is where we begin to free up that space in our minds that have been keeping us awake at night. This is truly the path to developing the unselfish spirit, and with it comes a peace of mind that's hard to imagine while we were still playing God ourselves.

It costs me nothing to be kind. My wish for those other people is that they can someday find the same peace of mind for themselves that this process has provided for me. What more can I say...

▲ Is Politics Seeping Into AA?

We have received many calls and emails at the CDO with concerns that politics have been inappropriately being discussed at AA meetings. We have clear instructions from the Big Book on Page 132 and from our Tradition 10:

Page 132 – Alcoholics Anonymous

"We intend the foregoing as a helpful suggestion only. So far as we are concerned, there is nothing obligatory about it. As non-denominational people, we cannot make up others' minds for them. Each individual should consult his own conscience.

We have been speaking to you of serious, sometimes tragic things. We have been dealing with alcohol in its worst aspect. But we aren't a glum lot. If newcomers

could see no joy or fun in our existence, they wouldn't want it. We absolutely insist on enjoying life. We try not to indulge in cynicism over the state of the nations, nor do we carry the world's troubles on our shoulders.

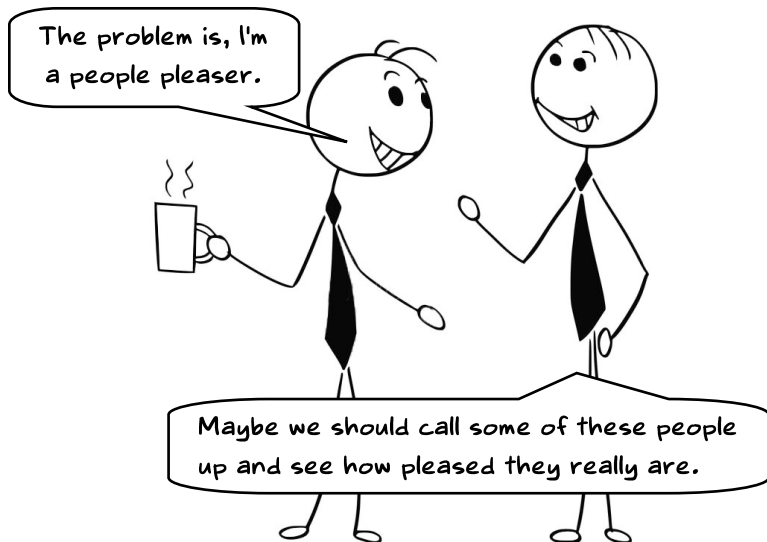
When we see a man sinking into the mire that is alcoholism, we give him first aid and place what we have at his disposal. For his sake, we do recount and almost relive the horrors of our past. But those of us who have tried to shoulder the entire burden and trouble of others find we are soon overcome by them.

So we think cheerfulness and laughter make for usefulness. Outsiders are sometimes shocked when we burst into merriment over a seemingly tragic experience out of the past. But why shouldn't we laugh? We have recovered, and have been given the power to help others."

Tradition 10 of Alcoholics Anonymous

Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the AA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

▲ Rule 62



▲ Tell Us Your Story of Your Zoom Meeting Experiences During COVID

The CDO is interested in our memberships' experience with Zoom Meetings during the COVID 19 lockdown. Within a very short period of time, meetings in Cleveland were closed and Zoom meetings took their place. There was some controversy involved but many members found Zoom a blessing during this period.



We are interested in how Zoom changed your AA experience. And, now that meetings are opened again, are you still going on Zoom or doing both in-person and online meetings.

Submit your story at aacle.org or by mail at Cleveland District Office, 1557 St. Clair NE, Cleveland, Ohio 44114.

▲ A Quote

FROM MY SPONSOR

"Remember... it's ok to look back, but don't stare."


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To add an event, call (216) 241-7387 or go online aacle.org/events. Deadline is the 15th of each month for the next issue.