

Monthly Reprieve

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RACINE AREA CENTRAL OFFICE'S MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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Store is open Monday through Friday from 9:00 am—5:00 pm. Saturdays 9:00 am—2:00 pm; Closed Sundays

By: **Katie M.**

Working with Others: Sponsorship Uncovered by the Big Book

I've heard some people express reservation and even fear when their sponsor tells them to raise their hand to sponsor. I have to admit, this was not my reaction. My ego expanded at the chance to tell other women I have all the answers if only you would listen to me. I have paid for this idea with frustration and resentment; a separation from God and my fellow AA's.

I don't think it's by mistake that our book talks about the foundation of our steps is to deflate our ego. Step 12, Working with Others, is no exception in my experience.

When I went through my first twelve steps, I was asked to call my sponsor every day and was given an assignment to read a chapter at a time. After underlining and highlighting the parts of the book that I related to, we would meet once a week to talk about it. We'd share the parts of the book that spoke to us. She also explained certain points the book made that I might have missed. This was a pretty similar experience I had with my second sponsor. In addition, she had me look up vocabulary words and would ask specific questions to consider as I was reading a chapter.

In talking with other women in the program, they too had assignments similar to mine. In doing the work, I was able to stay sober. Life seemed to be getting better. I still felt lonely and resentful at times, but I had suggestions on how to work through it. And

despite my lack of belief in some of those suggestions, they worked anyway. With such 'success,' I thought, this was how you sponsor. I thought this was the only way to sponsor. As I stuck around, I found people who weren't sponsored like that at all. I had such judgment about this. My first thought was to question if they had actually 'worked the steps'. I wondered how they had been able to stay sober. I was also guilty of judging character defects on how they were sponsored, saying things like, "I wouldn't want his sobriety." I understand now that going through the steps or how I go through the steps doesn't prevent me from having character defects.

It's clear that when I compare myself on my first day to today, there is a God working in my life. That's one of the miracles in the program—I don't have to be perfect to help another alcoholic.

In the last five years, I can't tell you how many times my ideas on how to do the steps and sponsor have had to shift to make room for the all-inclusive God that shows up in my life. The truth is, I have struggled staying in these rooms being so right. As my sponsor says, 'Thank God for how wrong I've been.' I've had some ideas recently about our text saying 'self-knowledge avails us nothing.' It made me wonder why I'm reading the book with sponsee's and not starting them on their 4th step right away. My thought is --The only way to know I've made a decision is to contin-

ue on with the steps. Reading the book or even understanding the book is not a decision. Lots of people know the book better than me and drink anyway. So I wonder, do I need to read all of that information before I can make a decision and start my 4th step? This thought led me back to 'Working with Others'. I was specifically looking for direction on sponsorship. I went through the chapter and numbered all of the directions it gives.

In summary, the chapter talked about what to say when you first meet a prospect and suggests giving them a copy of the book. They will need to read it and make a decision to go on with the steps. While waiting for them to decide whether or not to meet with you, it suggests we continue to look for more alcoholics to help. If they are ready to go on, you meet and get started on the inventory.

In no way am I suggesting that this is what everyone should do. I'm just sharing my thoughts, what I've read and some of my experience. I just see so many faces come and go.

I understand that before there was a Big Book, after the first meeting with their sponsor, they'd be sent off to make amends by the end of the night. I wonder if getting down to business may help someone start to connect to their Higher Power sooner than later, thereby creating a spiritual experience sufficient enough to bring recovery from their alcoholism.

Fourth Concept

"Throughout our conference structure, we ought to maintain a traditional "Right of Participation", that each group of our world servants be allowed a voting representation"



April Focus

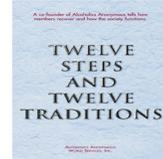
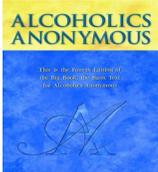
4th
STEP

Step Four

"Made a list of all people we had harmed and became willing to make amends to the all"

Fourth Tradition

"Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or AA as a whole".



Our Stories

What is the Truth?

By: Lisa A.

I always thought the truth was what I believed in my head. I can say everything was either black or white and nothing in between. I was in and out of the program bouncing at the Grove club from time to time.

A situation happened in my life where my Mother was sick and she needed me. She asked if she could live with me. My Sister called me and said she did not want her to stay with me and I was a drunk.

I could not stay mad because the truth was right there staring me in the face. She came to stay with a host of people and myself. I was going to get sober this time and for her.

There were many difficult times that occurred in the the house with arguments and chaos. People we lived with were still using drugs and alcohol.

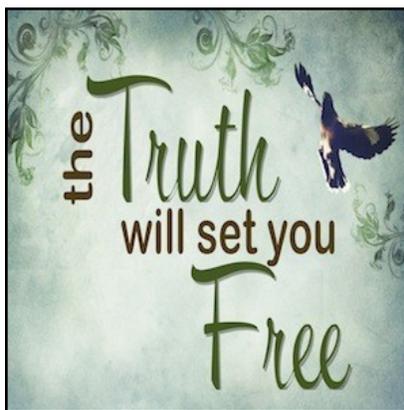
My sponsor told me to call her everyday and if she did not answer I was to leave a message. I was told to not react to the situations with the people in my house. I was also told to say "I am sorry you feel that way" and walk away. I did just that and it did not go over well.

I would go to the yard or

alley and call her. Rambling off all kinds of anger about what just happened. She would stop the flow and simply say, "What is the truth?" "Did you do that or did you say that?" "Then don't worry about it and let it go!"

What is the truth became a powerful tool for me today. It is good for me to realize the reality of truth in my everyday life.

Another aspect of the truth



is in my ego. I never understood what an ego was until AA. My head (the ego) tells me I am ugly, not good enough and I am different among others which is the untruth.

Also having bad perceptions, fear and expectations of others. Working the 12 steps of AA repeatedly and having been sober since August 7th 2010, I have been in some book read-

ing groups too. Reading 'A Return To Love' is where I learned about the ego. I learned that going beyond the anger and showing more love can be incredibly healing. Fighting myself and others never makes me feel good.

The truth is, I walked around in a coma state for years - harming everyone in my path, including myself.... playing a victim and not being responsible for anything.

Today I have awoken into a person that is learning how to live in a whole new way. With the help of my God and the family in AA - anything is possible. Learning how to do it different only takes a phone call or a meeting. As simple as it sounds, step by step I have been given the chance to start again today! My Mother was relieved from her Cancer and we now rent a house together. She is the best roommate ever!

My life has changed and continues to be a learning experience for each new day. As painful as the truth can sometimes be, I feel a sense of gratitude for having a better realization of the 'Truth' today.



Next we launched out on a course of vigorous action!

This was Step Four.

By: Lobo T.

A business which takes no regular inventory usually goes broke.

After being in the program for a couple months my sponsor told me to start on a fourth step. At first this scared me because I had to deal with things that I had been running from and avoiding for years. I also had to look at things about myself that were not something that would make me 'man of the year', but when I came to Step 1, I surrendered and realized I had to change. That meant not doing what I want but doing what I had to do to deal with my problem-ME! I was the source of all my problems so looking at the problems meant looking at me!

"We did exactly the same thing with our lives. We took stock honestly. First, we searched out the flaws in our make-up which caused our failure. Being convinced that self, manifested in various ways, was what had defeated us, we considered its common manifestations." (Big Book p.64)

"Therefore, we started upon a personal inventory. *This was Step Four.* A business which takes no regular inventory usually goes broke. Taking commercial inventory is a fact-finding and a fact-facing process. It is an effort to discover the truth about the stock-in-trade. One object is to disclose damaged or unsalable goods, to get rid of them promptly and without regret. If the owner of the business is to be successful, he cannot fool himself about values." (Big Book p.64)

When I read this I realized I

needed to be HONEST! Not what was the truth in my opinion but the real facts! This would be a lesson in discipline. This was an inventory not a walk down memory lane! If that happened either I would waste my time reminiscing or become so emotional I would quit! I needed to stay on task!

My sponsor told me to just make a list of all my resentments. The word resentment comes from the Latin (Re- do again senti- feel). So anything that with a thought would cause me to re-feel the event that happened in my life is resentments. So I took his suggestion of getting a pen and a small notebook to write down the resentments as they came to mind. For an angry man like me, my resentments became a long list!

"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. In dealing with resentments, we set them on paper. We listed people, institutions or principle with whom we were angry. We asked ourselves why we were angry. In most cases it was found that our self-esteem, our pocketbooks, our ambitions, our personal relationships (including sex) were hurt or threatened. So we were sore. We were "burned up." (Big Book p.64-65)

The humiliation I created caused me to feel humble, I was

b r o k e n !

It was at this point that I realized the importance and reason for the first three steps.

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol- that our lives had become unmanageable. (I had to be honest, open-minded, and willing to let someone or something manage my life)

2. Came to believe that a Power greater than our-selves could restore us to sanity. (I had to depend on something greater than myself to fix the brokenness inside me!)

3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him*. (I turned the broken pieces over to God and abandoned my rebellious nature!)

We trust infinite God rather than our finite selves. We are in the world to play the role He assigns. Just to the extent that we do as we think He would have us, and humbly rely on Him, does He enable us to match calamity with serenity. (BB p.67)

I came through the doors with no hope; the people shared their strength and hope that gave me hope! I knew I needed them and God for this next step so each time before working on my inventory I would pray. After working on it was off to a meeting! I needed the people at these meetings they were my channel from God, my strength and hope, wisdom and many times it was not what I wanted but always what I needed. I was sick and they helped me! (Continued on Page 4)

We avoid retaliation or argu-



Next we launched out on a course of vigorous action!

This was Step Four (continued)

By: Lobo T.

ment. We wouldn't treat sick people that way. If we do, we destroy our chance of being helpful. We cannot be helpful to all people, but at least God will show us how to take a kindly and tolerant view of each and every one. (BB p66)

We asked God to help us show them the same tolerance, pity, and patience that we would cheerfully grant a sick friend. When a person offended we said to ourselves, "This is a sick man. How can I be helpful to him? God save me from being angry. Thy will be done." (BB.P66)

When I was in doubt, disturbed by the conduct of others, when I was afraid, and when I see my own defects and needed God's help for change I would pray. If you are not good with prayers or don't know what to say there is a page of prayers for each step go to silkworth.net and see the prayer page.

We went back through our lives. Nothing counted but thoroughness and honesty. When we were finished we considered it carefully. (Big Book p.65)

When doing my inventory I just made the list of names, institutions and situations that caused me to feel resentments. The rest of the work was done with my sponsor; just looking at it on paper was reminder enough for me. If I went to the second Column it was too emotional to be alone.

I feared that if I did I would drink! The more the list grew the more I wanted to unload it all!

But with the alcoholic, whose hope is the maintenance and growth of a spiritual experience, this business of resentment is infinitely grave. We found that it is fatal. For when harboring such feeling we shut ourselves off from the sunlight of the Spirit. The insanity of alcohol returns and we drink again. And with us, to drink is to die. (Big book p.77)

It was during this inventory that I was forced to look at my life good and bad. With the help of God, the fellowship, the Big Book, 12 x 12 and my sponsor that this action started to cause a change! My relationship with God became started to become intimate, people in the fellowship helped me open up, and my sponsor kept me focused on the task at hand. All of these miracles in my life started tearing down the walls and helped me down the path to my new journey.

I continued to do this same process for my fears, sexual conduct and people that I have hurt. Before I knew it was time to go to the next step and share this with my sponsor.

All men of faith have courage. They trust their God. We never apologize for God. Instead we let Him demonstrate, through us, what He can do.

We ask Him to remove our fear and direct our attention to what He would have us be. At once, we commence to out-grow fear. (BB p68)

In this book you read again and again that faith did for us what we could not do for ourselves. We hope you are convinced now that God can remove whatever self-will has blocked you off from Him. If you have already made a decision, and an inventory of your grosser handicaps, you have made a good beginning.

That being so you have swallowed and digested some big chunks of truth about yourself. (BB p70).

If we have been thorough about our personal inventory, we have written down a lot. We have listed and analyzed our resentments. We have begun to comprehend their futility and their fatality. We have commenced to see their terrible destructiveness. We have begun to learn tolerance, patience and good will toward all men, even our enemies, for we look on them as sick people. We have listed the people we have hurt by our conduct, and are willing to straighten out the past if we can. (BB p70)



Events and Service Notes

District 17 Corrections

For those looking to jumpstart their involvement in service work, District 17 is in need of help in carrying the message to those in the Corrections system. There are many positions that fall under the heading of Corrections service work—Corrections Correspondence Service, Pre-release Contact Program, and AA meetings on the inside, to name a few. For those interested in getting involved—please contact Steve N. (Area 75 District 17 Corrections Committee Chair) at (262) 939-9676 or nova221sgn@wi.rr.com.

RACO Steering Committee Meetings

The Racine Area Central Office's 'Steering Committee' meets on the first Saturday of every month at RACO. The steering committee invites anyone who may be interested in Area 75 and District 17 events and happenings. The Steering Committee also currently has a few open positions available (which can be seen on Page 6 of the this edition of The Reprieve). Check it out! If you or someone you know might be interested in sitting-in on a Committee meeting or possibly filling an open position, please join us for a monthly meeting or email raconewsletter@gmail.com for information on available positions and position requirements. We look forward to seeing you at the next Committee meeting!

Detox Help Needed

Volunteers are needed for detox meetings throughout the area. Detox meetings are a great way to carry your message to the newcomer, who often needs to hear a message of hope. Requirements to become a volunteer are six months to attend with others and one year to attend solo. Meetings are held Sunday-Friday at 8pm and Saturday & Sunday mornings at 9:30am. Detox meetings are held at St. Lukes on Wisconsin Ave. and 14th St. For further information, please contact Roxann D.

Upcoming Events & Activities

Fridays in April
Young at Heart
“ New Young Peoples Meeting”
The Benjamin House
6:00pm

Saturday, April 4th
RACO Steering Committee Meeting at RACO
9:30am-10:30am

Saturday, April 11th
Acoustic Café
The Grove Club, Racine, WI
8:00pm

Saturday, April 18th
Spring Dance
The Grove Club
Starts at 8:30pm

Know of any future A.A. events? Email raconewsletter@gmail.com to get published in next months Reprieve!



Help is Everywhere

District/Club Information

District 17		Racine, Wisconsin
Racine Alano Club 1140 Douglas Ave. Racine, WI 53404 (262) 634-9902	The Grove Club 1037 Grove Ave. Racine, WI 53405 (262) 634-9656	Benjamin House 4848 Highway H Franksville, WI 53126 (262) 886-9611
Benjamin House Website: http://www.benjaminhouseracine.org/		
District 7		Kenosha, Wisconsin
Kenosha Alano Club 630 56 th St. Kenosha, WI 53140 (262) 654-8246	Outcasts 1310 63 rd St. Kenosha, WI 53144	Club Breakaway 8017 Sheridan Rd. Kenosha, WI 53143 (262) 653-9800
Kenosha Alano Club Website: http://kenoshaalanoclub.org		
District 36		Burlington 12 x 12 Club 724 N. Pine St. Burlington, WI
West Racine/Kenosha County		
District 6		Walworth County Alano Club 611 E. Walworth St. Delavan, WI 53115 (262) 740-1888
Eastern Walworth County		
District 12		Eastern Lake County, Illinois
Alano Club of Waukegan 2419 Washington St. Waukegan, IL 60085 (847) 662-9640	Zion-Benton Alano Club 228 Sheridan Rd. Winthrop Harbor, IL 60096 (847) 746-9842	
Alano Club of Waukegan Website: http://alanoclubwaukegan.com/		
Waukegan Hotline: (847) 623-9660		
District 10		Antioch Recovery Club 311 E Depot St.; Suite C Antioch, IL 60002 (847) 838-1882
Western Lake County		
Antioch Recovery Club: http://www.antiochrecoveryclub.org/		
Antioch Hotline: (847) 395-5988		

Alcoholics Anonymous is not affiliated with any club or other outside enterprise

Racine Area Central Office

Officers/Steering Committee

Chairperson	Roxann D.
Co-Chairperson	VACANT
Secretary	Courtney K.
Co-Secretary	VACANT
Treasurer	Pam L.
Co-Treasurer	Jessica O.H.
Staffing Coordinator	John B.
Co-Staffing Coordinator	Bruce P.
Newsletter	Kevin B.
Co-Newsletter	Steve H.
Hotline Chairperson	Mark S.
Co-Hotline Chairperson	Jon K.
Literature Chairperson	Rachel S.
Co-Literature Chair	Deb K.
Procurement	Steve K.
Webmaster	Courtney L.
Co-Webmaster	Brian K.
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