

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

Sometimes when you lose, you actually win.

by: Jon Legue

I Lost,
I lost the fight
With alcohol,
with depression,
With drugs,
And anxiatal obsession,
but here is my lesson...



I Won
I Won the WAR
I have come out stronger than I was before
I don't even now recall what I was fighting for
I know now that wasn't even my fight to be fought anymore
I have been shown a new door, a new way of life-free of strife
It is not always easy but so much more worthwhile, believe me

Tradition Two

"For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority-a loving God as he may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants: they do not govern."



February Focus

Third Step Prayer

"God, I offer myself to thee, to build with me and do with me as though wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy power, Thy love, and Thy way of life. May I do Thy will always" Amen"

Step Two

"Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity."

Morning Meditation/Night Reflection

Morning Meditation

On awakening let us think about the 24 hours ahead. We consider our plans for the day. Before we begin, we ask GOD to direct our thinking, especially that it be divorced from self-pity, dishonest or self seeking motives. Under these conditions we can employ our mental faculties with assurance, for after all GOD gave us brains to use. Our thought life will be placed on a much higher plane when our thinking is cleared of wrong motives.

In thinking about our day we may face indecision. We may not be able to determine which course to take. Here we ask GOD for inspiration, an intuitive thought or a decision. We relax and take it easy. We do not struggle. We are often surprised how the right answers will come to us after we have tried this for a while. What used to be the hunch or the occasional inspiration gradually becomes a working part of the mind. Being still inexperienced and having just made conscious contact with GOD, it is not probable that we are going to be inspired at all times. We might pay for this presumption in all sorts of absurd actions and ideas. Nevertheless, we find that our thinking will, as time passes, be more and more on the plane of inspiration. We come to RELY on it.

We usually conclude the period of meditation with a prayer that we be shown through the day what our next step is to be, that we be given whatever we need to take care of such problems. We ask especially for freedom from self-will, and be careful to make no request for ourselves only. We may ask for ourselves, however if others will be helped. We are careful never to pray for our own selfish ends. Many of us have wasted a lot of time doing that and it doesn't work. You can easily see why.

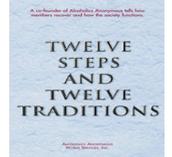
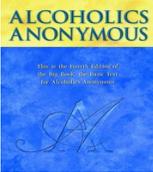
If circumstances warrant, we ask our wives or friends to join us in morning meditation. If we belong to a religious denomination which requires a definite morning devotion, we attend to that also. If not members of religious bodies, we sometimes select and memorize a few set prayers which emphasize the principles we have been discussing. There are many helpful books also. Suggestions about these may be obtained from one's priest, minister, or rabbi. Be quick to see where religious people are right. Make use of what they offer.

As we go through the day we pause, when agitated or doubtful, and ask for the right thought or action. We constantly remind ourselves we are no longer running the show, humbly saying to ourselves many times each day "Thy Will be Done." We are then in much less danger of excitement, fear, anger, worry, self-pity, or foolish decisions. We become much more efficient. We do not tire so easily, for we are not burning up energy foolishly as we did when we were trying to arrange life to suit ourselves

Night Time Reflection

1. Was I resentful?
2. Was I dishonest?
3. Did I promptly admit when I was wrong today?
4. Do I owe an apology?
5. Did I say or do something today out of fear?
6. Have I kept something to myself which should be discussed with another person at once?
7. Did I think today of what I can do for others?
8. Was I kind and loving towards all?
9. Did I reach out to someone in recovery today to see how they were doing?
10. Did I take time to connect with my higher power through prayer and meditation.





Our Stories

A Reprieve

THIS IS WHAT A DAILY REPRIEVE LOOKS LIKE

Addiction isn't like most other diseases. While other diseases tend to be either physical or psychological, addiction is actually *both* physical and psychological. It strips a person of his or her physical health, altering the brain's structure and functioning as well. The cumulative effect is an almost complete transformation. People who become addicted to alcohol or drugs are no longer in control of themselves. Mind-altering, chemical substances have hijacked their brains, causing them to behave in ways they would never have otherwise. But there are inevitable consequences of their behaviors, many of which they either don't consider beforehand or don't care about due to their persistent fixation. Fortunately, there are recovery resources available to those in need. In fact, there are many different resources and treatment programs available, which can be mixed and match in a seemingly infinite number of ways, ensuring that everyone gets his or her needs met. The reason that there are so many forms of treatment available is because everyone who develops addictions are experiencing different effects from the disease. For some, the effects are primarily physical while others experience mostly psychological effects. Then there are those who experience the spiritual effects in addition to the others.

Spirituality isn't a concept that many people would be quick to associate with addiction, but with such a significant part of the U.S. being religious—in fact, it's estimated that at least 83 percent of all Americans ascribe to the Christian faith—it follows that spirituality and/or faith would be an extremely important component of life for most people who become addicted. Therefore, the following will offer a concise discussion of the place spirituality has in the addiction recovery process for some people. Additionally, we will be taking a closer look at what's called a daily reprieve and discuss how it's related, if at all, to spirituality in recovery.

Spirituality & Recovery

Bill Wilson—the founder of Alcoholics Anonymous and the twelve-step method in Ohio in the 1930s—made a number of comments about why it was that people become addicted. During an interview, Wilson said that people became addicted after they had tried, without success, to find God—or a sense of meaning and fulfillment—at the bottom of a bottle rather than from within or from some other less destructive source. By this, Wilson was essentially saying that people were trying to use alcohol (or drugs) to fill a void that existed in many people. Perhaps the void was the result of loneliness, depression, guilt or shame, or because the individual lacked a sense accomplishment and validation, or self-worth. In short, the substance abuse began because of some sense of inner emptiness.

Although it may not apply to everyone who becomes addicted, it seems that Wilson was right. A growing number of people are preferring to incorporate their religious beliefs or spirituality into the recovery process. This makes a lot of sense because a person's spirituality and beliefs, like every other aspect of a person's existence, is inevitably going to be affected by continuous alcohol or drug abuse. As chemical substances become an increasingly central part of an addict's life, the individual spends less time meeting his or her spiritual and religious needs, which results in a spiritual deficit if the individual wasn't experiencing a lack of spirituality prior to becoming addicted. As such, it makes a lot of sense to incorporate spirituality into the recovery process since lack of spirituality was either the cause of or contributed to the initial problem.

What Exactly is a "Reprieve"?

Before we can begin discussing "daily reprieve", it's important to know the basic definition of the word "reprieve". According to its definition, a reprieve refers to the delaying, putting off, or prevention of something difficult or destructive for a certain period of time. As you'll notice, the word is reminiscent of similar terms like "postpone", referring to something that you consciously choose to do later rather than right now; however, it should be noted that the task or duty that is to be postponed during a reprieve typically has a negative connotation. In particular, it suggests that a person has consciously chosen to delay a task that is difficult or destructive, which distinguishes the concept from similar words that involve some type of continuance.

A Daily Reprieve for the Recovering Mind

So what exactly does a reprieve have to do with addiction recovery? Well, we must first understand the general state of mind of someone in recovery is in. To sustain one's recovery successfully, he or she must remain focused. Rather than returning home from rehab and simply resuming his or her previous life, the individual must remain conscious and aware of the tools and strategies learned while in rehab. All of the things that the individual learned in rehab to *get* sober, he or she must remember and continue using after returning home. It's only by continuing to use these recovery tools and relapse prevention strategies that the individual is able to remain sober for an extended period of time.

However, this entails a lot of mental energy and concentration. In fact, when you consider the many different components of a successful recovery, it's even a bit overwhelming. That's where the daily reprieve comes in.

The recovering addict's daily reprieve refers to a brief period an addict should take each and every day to push recovery out of his or her mind. For those who have incorporated a strong spiritual component into their recoveries, this often means taking the time to source strength in recovery from the higher power of one's understanding and belief. In effect, rather than focusing on the work that's required to stay sober, the addict appeals to his or her higher power for the strength and assistance to stay sober. Almost like a more focused form of meditation, this daily reprieve is believed to incrementally reduce the amount of mental strain this puts on someone in recovery. Bit by bit, the daily reprieve helps a person begin deriving the source of his or her sobriety from his or her higher power rather than from continuous focus and concentration. It could be likened to slowly putting one's recovery on "autopilot", having to steer less and less on his or her own.



The warning signs were there. And as the years rolled by, I knew I was getting older and not getting any better.

My alcoholic story begins in the summer of 1966 in the basement bar of a school friend's parents house. It was there that I first drank with the purpose of getting drunk.

From that day forward, for the next 37 years, I drank as often as I could, at first letting little get in the way of it, and toward the end letting absolutely nothing get in the way.

My first drunk, I imagine, was like every other alcoholic's. It was almost magical - I loved it! Alcohol for me was the missing piece of the puzzle -- the miraculous elixir. It "evened the playing field", per say - made up for shortcomings. It connected the dots! I had cracked the code! In an instant, I wasn't shy or awkward anymore! I was funny, crazy, outgoing and invincible.

This set of falsehoods would cloud my judgment, hurt me, and all who cared about me for decades. There were plenty of warning signs I blew through during those years that would have stopped a non-alcoholic in his tracks.

In high school, with an A on the line in my favorite class with a teacher I adored, I had prepared well for a forensics competition and should have been ready to compete. But I was too drunk on the Thursday night of the competition to be in any shape to compete.

When my teacher asked if I was all-right, I lied, said I didn't really care, and accepted my C. The summer before college I crashed into a parked car and a bike rack full of bikes. I tried to run, but was in no shape to do that.

I was brought home by the police, who knew my dad so didn't cite me for drunk driving. Then off to college, rooming with a friend I'd known since junior high. We'd both planned to play football in college, but it never happened. He got kicked out of school for drugs, and I dropped out because I couldn't reconcile studying with my nonstop party mentality. Before I dropped out, the R.A. on my dorm floor sat me down and gave me this warning, I was becoming a "waste of a life were many. All along my friends and family, doctors, even the police kept asking me why? And my only answer was: I don't know. A life wasted.

June 18th 1998 I was in the sick room of the Grove Club, forced to attend an AA meeting because I was staying at a crisis center and spa after a three-day getaway at "Club Detox"!

I would not remain sober from that point on for 6 years. Still, I heard enough that day to point me in the right direction, and give me some hope. I heard, and finally believed, that I didn't have to live like this anymore, and I could have a meaningful life again.

Eventually, on April 23, 2004, I found my home in AA, with a host of wonderful friends. And with that, I began to repair relationships I had previously destroyed.

My name became re-associated with employment, a drivers license, and insurance! These changes really came to me in an unexpected way. They came after working the 12 Steps and believing that I needed to carry the message to other alcoholics! It has been quite refreshing to think about people other than myself.

Belief in a Higher Power and a desire to do the next right thing, I've recently been attending AA meetings at the Veterans Hospital in Milwaukee with my good friend Rich N, which has again helped me through a time of need - because I sometimes forget that nothing helps us more than working with another alcoholic!

My college roommate, the friend I'd known since junior-high school, called me yesterday to tell me he's entering treatment at the VA in Milwaukee, starting today. He asked me if I would be his sponsor! I haven't seen him in 40 years, but I told him, "Of course I will, my old friend. I'm excited to work with you".

Is this the reason I've been to thousands of meetings and hundreds of visits to detox? Yes, I believe it is! I've figured what they told me all along was true" - to keep this gift I was given so freely, I must continue to give it away" - a life not wasted



Events and Service Notes

RACO Volunteers Needed!!

The Racine Area Central Office has unfortunately had to close its doors during some daytime hours over the past few weeks due to a shortage of volunteers to staff the desk. If you or someone you sponsor has an interest in getting trained to staff the desk and be of service, please call RACO at (262) 554-6611 and we will get you in touch with John B.—RACO's Staffing Coordinator. No one who needs the services of RACO should ever be turned away due to a shortage of volunteers! Be of service to your central office today! :-)

Kenosha / Racine Oxford Houses

Are you in early recovery or know someone who is? The Oxford House concept, which emphasizes that "together we can democratically run a clean and sober house" is helpful to gaining the strength and support to achieve longterm sobriety.

With separate houses for both men and women, there are Oxford Houses in both Kenosha as well as Racine—providing the support and accountability to help in early recovery. For more information, or to request an interview, please call

(262) 800-3840 or visit www.oxfordhouse.org for a history, vacancies, locations and applications. Let the Oxford House help you or someone you love get a jumpstart into a happy and healthy life of clean and sober living

today!

RACO Steering Committee Meetings

The Racine Area Central Office's 'Steering Committee' meets on the first **WEDNESDAY** of every month at RACO (6:30pm). The steering committee invites anyone who may be interested in Area 75 and District 17 events and happenings.

Please note the NEW day/time of the Steering Committee meetings—as they used to be held on Saturday mornings! 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!

Upcoming Events & Activities

Saturday, March 9th

37th Annual Tri-County Conference Kenosha, Wisconsin. @UAW Hall 3615 Washington RD. 8:00am kick-off

February 22nd-24th 2019

Women's 12 Step Recovery Retreat

April 26-28 2019

Couples Spiritual Retreat at Villa Desiderata Retreat Center 3015 N. Bayview Lane, McHenry IL 60051

June 21-23 2019

19th Annual Midwest Motorcycle Alcoholics Anonymous Convention Winnebago County Fairgrounds 500 West First Main St. Pecatonica, IL 61063

*Know of any upcoming events?
Email raconewsletter@gmail.com*



