

# Monthly Reprieve

Volume 12, Issue 7

July 2016

## 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

## The 7th Step - What IS Humility?

The seventh step of Alcoholics Anonymous urges us to embrace pursuit of humility as a fundamental aspect of staying sober. Humility is equally vital on the path towards a useful, happy life. Yet AA and NA meeting participants often struggle when trying to define humility. The modern world tends to associate humility with weakness, or at the least, an almost passive mode of existence. But is humility the way of weakness?

In the opening paragraphs of the chapter devoted to step seven in The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, Bill Wilson emphatically states, "the attainment of greater humility is the foundation principle of each of AA's twelve steps." The legendary alcoholic goes on to claim that, "...without some degree of humility, no alcoholic can stay sober at all." So even if humility is for sissies and lame ducks, if I don't have it, I'm not going to be sober long. Same goes for any alcoholic or drug addict reading this humble article.

Another problem with today's concept of humility lies in its association with punishment. How many times have we heard how a situation involved a dose of humble pie? Punishment, however, is not synonymous with this misunderstood virtue. We can chalk up this misguided notion to the advent of American exceptionalism.

At the time the big book of Alcoholic Anonymous was published (1935), and later when The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions was published (1952), the quality of humility referred to a "reasonable perspective of oneself." Bill Wilson expanded this definition when he wrote that humility was, "the clear recognition of what and who we really are, followed by a sincere attempt to be what we can be."

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of personas on me, depending on the quantity and mixture of intoxicants. There was out-of-my-mind me, incoherently rambling about a variety of topics which I knew nothing about. There was also the pitiful drunk sitting at the bar while sobbing over the somber cards life had dealt. Substance abuse brought out more faces on me than one of Shakespeare's 'players'.

In postwar America, sincere recognition of a necessary reliance upon a Higher Power was expected of any social or political leader. This spiritual relationship helped mold the core of American culture. Unfortunately today, spirituality has lost its luster. In walked iPods, cell phones, pop music and social media. Out walked genuine compassion, service and self-sacrifice.

Even in 1952, however, the idea that "character building and spiritual values had to come first" and "material satisfactions were not the purpose of living" was no easy task for the authors of 12 step recovery to sell. Visions of fortunes and modern convenience burned bright in the United States, and pursuit of wealth tended to prevail over personal character development. So while today's problems of power and prestige aren't fresh news, I think it's safe to say the scope of our culture's spiritual sickness continues to grow.

So what does a humble person look like today? How does a person who has genuine humility walk and talk today? How can we recognize the precious sobriety sustaining quality of "humility" that Bill Wilson was trying to convey when he pointed to it "as the foundation of each of AA's 12 steps?"

According to several dictionaries, the definition of a person displaying humility is one who acts "stable, steady, calm, patient, open-minded, nonjudgmental, temperate and realistic." Certainly, no one can reasonably argue with this long litany of desirable character traits. All of these demonstrations

of humility possess great merit. Yet none of these descriptions of a humble person mention the "essential ingredient" or "essence" of all humility, which Bill Wilson carefully points out, is "the desire to seek and do God's will."

In the 12 steps, "...the desire to seek and do God's will" is the essential ingredient. Over time, unless the word humility is enlarged in Alcoholics Anonymous' lexicon, the essential, sobriety sustaining notion that seeking the will of God is the most important ingredient in the 12 step recipe for recovery may be lost. Unless, the essential concept of "humility" is clarified and enlarged in modern AA culture, this vital glue will become lost in translation. In a nutshell, humility is the honest desire to seek and do God's will; nothing more and nothing less.

Words are symbols to express ideas normally larger than the word itself. Consequently, many of our biggest and most important ideas are represented by several words that surround a complex notion. It seems the concept of humility might be best expressed today by a group of words rather than just one word. Word Clouds, popular on the internet today, work well to express an idea that is bigger than just one word.

What would your word cloud for humility look like? Would it contain only the visible attributes of humility like "stable, calm, patient, open minded, nonjudgmental, temperate and realistic" or would your word cloud also contain the all-important, historic essence of the concept of humility: the desire to seek and do God's will?

Ultimately, the seventh step teaches us a useful, happy life is only attainable if we spend our lives seeking and doing God's will. Humility is merely a natural demonstration of a fulfilling, spiritual life.

### Seventh Promise

"We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves"



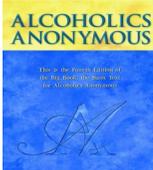
## July Focus

### Step Seven

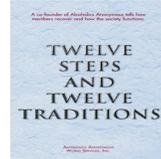
*"Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings"*

### Seventh Tradition

*"Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions"*



# Our Stories



## Living a Dishonest Life

By: *Katie M.*

As a girl I have very vivid memories of a lot of lies I told. In first grade I told everyone my brother died. It was really awkward when my mom, sister and brother came to pick me up that day. That was also the year kids in school told me I looked like the little girl from the Love Boat so I explained that it was me and I worked on the weekends. I even went as far in fourth grade to tell everyone my uncle was Hulk Hogan. If the teacher ever held up a school supply and asked who it belonged to, I was sure to raise my hand.

My consequences were swift and merciless. Everyone knew I was liar and very few wanted to be my friend. As time went on, I learned to be a little sneakier as to not get caught. So when I started to drink every day, I had two separate lives; one that was at home and one that was at the bar. I didn't want either to mix.

There were times in the beginning when I couldn't stomach the lies I told. But eventually I was able to justify them and make them reasonable through resentment and self-delusion. Every now and then I would become conscious of what I was doing. This sudden awareness left me feeling sick and disgusted.

After finally buying into this solution in AA, I was sick of all of the lies. I came clean to my roommate that I had been using and drinking and the guardian ad litem in my divorce hearing. I called a woman to ask her to be my sponsor and an IOP program I had previously left early. I couldn't spend another second living the life I was living.

But that was just a beginning.

I soon learned through these 12 steps I was not the nice girl that just drank too much because her husband was a jerk. It turned out I was extremely immature, grandiose, selfish, self-seeking, and dishonest. I had been so outwardly rude, degrading and mean to so many. Reading the suggestion to "pause when agitated" made a lot of sense. My first years in AA were spent shutting my mouth and not sending crazy texts. I found I could just turn off my emotions and be empty.

This worked- until it didn't.

It wasn't until the last few years, though, that I started to experience the inability to breath. It seemed like it would come out of nowhere my heart would race, I couldn't catch my breath and a feeling a panic would overcome me. I was powerless. The occurrences were getting closer together. I was getting to the place where I was willing to do anything- including the suggestion to go to a therapist.

It turned out that I had been living a dishonest life and was having a physical response to it. I would pause when agitated, do an inventory but hold on to all of it. Despite talking to other AA's and sharing these inventories, there was something I wasn't doing; something that kept me holding on to all of it.

What I've discovered is I've been living that dual life again. My external life, the one I would show the world, is void of anger, distress or emotional struggle. The other life, my internal life, was full of frustration, anger and high voltage emotions. I didn't know how to feel those feelings. All of my previous experience

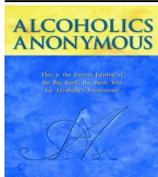
had been so destructive with those emotions that I didn't trust myself to have them. It was pointed out to me in the 12 in 12 Steps 6 & 7 that we have emotions and instincts for a reason. These things are not inherently bad and neither was I.

I discovered that when I keep my external and internal life separate, I am living a dishonest life. For me, that has meant physical consequences. I've recently started to tell people when they hurt my feelings and when I feel angry or frustrated. I even confronted someone that I had heard was talking negatively about me. I would feel uncomfortable when I'd see her. Every time I'd say hello, it was like this other voice inside me was having a different conversation with her entirely. I could feel the resentment start. But the funny thing is, once I talked to her and told her she didn't have to do anything different, I just wanted to let her know I've been struggling with how to react to her, I felt this weight lifted and my resentment was gone. She didn't have to do anything different- I did.

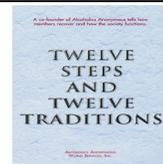
It's been many months since I've had an anxiety attack. I don't risk keeping things to myself for very long. I have amazing people around me who remind me to acknowledge how I feel as part of my nightly inventory process.

I don't know where this is taking me. And I don't know how this will all turn out. But despite the painful experience of discovery, I don't believe this is the end. I believe there is more- so much more. I'm really not looking forward to it. Luckily, I identify as an alcoholic and I believe my life depends on continuing this path. And luckily today I'm willing to do it.





# Our Stories



## A Deeper Look Into Step 7 *(book excerpts)*

The seventh step of Alcoholics Anonymous urges us to embrace pursuit of humility as a fundamental aspect of staying sober. Humility is equally vital on the path towards a useful, happy life. Yet AA and NA meeting participants often struggle when trying to define humility. The modern world tends to associate humility with weakness, or at the least, an almost passive mode of existence. But is humility the way of weakness?

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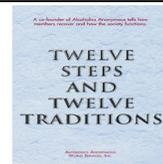
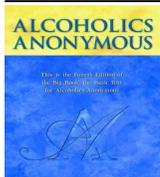
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# Our Stories

## Willingness Can Fill the God-sized Hole

*By: Jessica N.*

When I first read the words “were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character,” I was so willing to be struck by lightning that I would have bought the lightning rod myself. After my fifth step, the directions were to go home and review the previous steps, then read step 6 and reflect and meditate for an hour.

I felt disappointed and let down. No bolt of lightning. No zap and all the hard work and soul searching would be rewarded by having all these defects removed in one swoop! I was cheated. Indeed there was relief. I shared my story with another alcoholic. That alone should have been relief enough, but I am greedy and selfish. Self-centered to the extreme. After that I was just indifferent. If I cause no harm, I make no amends. Or maybe I just became a little sneakier, disguising defects as opportunities to be helpful. Or maybe the pain wasn't great enough quite yet.

Today, I hold an entirely different experience with this program. Earlier it was shared with me that there was only one key and it was willingness. This appears to be the key to all of my troubles. I really tried to search for the magic directions to remove all of these defects. I read books, questioned others, and perused internet sites like [www.barefootworld.net](http://www.barefootworld.net).

I always search for the easier answer. Perhaps, it was just easier to sit in the

ugly and reserve these defects because it was just plain fun and easier than looking inward. Maybe, I could just continue to embrace the chaos. I understood chaos. I knew how to react to chaos. I can swoop in and save the day with chaos. I would be the hero and people would need me. I would continue to feed my ego and pride. That particular program of action is painful and is a sad trip through fear and stunted growth. Wouldn't a willingness to do just a little but different everyday be way easier?

If I was to separate myself from all of these defects of character, it would be a lifetime job. After all, it was a lifetime job to perfect them all and arrive to this point. I want to be a different person today and I am willing to grow. Ok.

The real truth is that not one of us does this perfectly. I am looking at the word counter right now thinking to myself “what can I possibly come up with that will fill another 400 words?” And why on God's green earth do I agree to write these things? Ugh. So, how about some truth?

Anyone who knows me well also knows that I love my couch and sitting on it. I am always eager to help, right now, but I am slow on any follow through. I judge. I love my food and do not like to share. Money scares the crap out of me and I hate bills. I don't know what to do with bills. I want everyone to know I have the right answer,

even though it may be wrong. I plan entire scenarios in my head. I prefer to lead and I can be bossy. I love to put off until tomorrow what I don't have to do today. In my head, I blame others for whatever I feel bad about. There are so many more. Any why?

These are the things that I have done for years and years. I do those things well. They may not always feel great anymore, but I KNOW them.

Truth about Today? I am more willing than ever to do something different. I am more willing to walk down some scary paths. I actually enjoy getting out of the defects that hold me prisoner.

When I start my day with some kind of prayer, find a few moments to meditate and go out into the world with a design for living that works, it becomes easier and easier to do the right thing.

The defects that I relish are replaced by character strengths. These are the things that lighten my load and calm my crazy head. I think this is the necessary path to fill this “God sized” hole. I don't have look for all of the “other things.” This is my path to finding love and compassion for a Higher Power in my life today.

Of course, I never thought when I started this that there was peace, happiness and serenity at the end of trudge.



# Events and Service Notes

## *When Anyone, Anywhere Reaches Out For Help, I Want The Hand Of A.A. Always To Be There ...*

Are you an AA member with the desire to carry the message to the still suffering alcoholic? Your service is needed by the District 17 Special Needs/Accessibility Committee. No prior knowledge is needed, and there are tons of ways in which your service is needed. Be on the lookout for the volunteer signups like the one below circulating at the meetings, or bring this form to *your* meeting/group, or contact the Carly R at [racinespecialneeds@gmail.com](mailto:racinespecialneeds@gmail.com) for other ways to contribute.

### Whom We Serve:

- ✓ Physically disabled
- ✓ Deaf & hearing impaired
- ✓ Blind & visually impaired
- ✓ Learning or reading impaired
- ✓ Seniors and homebound
- ✓ Language barrier
- ✓ Single parents requiring childcare.
- ✓ Encourage Big Book tape study meetings in each district.
- ✓ Encourage groups to provide childcare.
- ✓ Update special-needs information on Where & When's.
- ✓ Bring meetings into the home, hospital, or long-term care facilities; encourage
- ✓ districts and groups to support regular meetings in special-needs facilities.
- ✓ Provide literature and hold workshops on special needs.
- ✓ Explore other special needs; work with GSO and other districts & areas.

### How We Serve:

- ✓ Provide interpreters for meetings and events.
- ✓ Provide Braille A.A. literature and programs for special events.
- ✓ Assist the physically disabled at events; provide rides in special cases.
- ✓ Encourage wheelchair-accessible meetings and events.

**Special Needs/Accessibility Committee: Contact: Carly R (chair)**  
[racinespecialneeds@gmail.com](mailto:racinespecialneeds@gmail.com)

*And For That, I Am Responsible !*

## 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](mailto:nova221sgn@wi.rr.com).

## Upcoming Events & Activities

### Fridays in June

Young at Heart  
“ Young Peoples Meeting”  
The Benjamin House  
6:00pm

### Saturday, June 4th

Bingo Night at the Grove Club  
8:00pm start. \$1 per card  
Bring a snack to share!

### June 11th & 25th & July 9

Grove Club Picnic Planning  
11:00am @ The Grove Club

### Saturday June 25th

Grove Club Bicycle Ride  
Come meet w/ Bike at Grove  
11:45am

### Saturday, July 9th

Grove Club Membership Meeting  
Elections at Noon for Secretary,  
Activities, and President

### Saturday, July 16th

The Grove Club Picnic  
Pritchard Park, Racine, WI  
Noon - 3:00 / Please bring dish  
and/or cake for cake walk

### August 19th - 21st

36th Annual Green Lake Roundup  
Green Lake, WI



# Help is Everywhere

## District/Club Information

<b>District 17</b>		<b>Racine, Wisconsin</b>
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: <a href="http://www.benjaminhouseracine.org/">http://www.benjaminhouseracine.org/</a>		
<b>District 7</b>		<b>Kenosha, Wisconsin</b>
Kenosha Alano Club 630 56 <sup>th</sup> St. Kenosha, WI 53140 (262) 654-8246	Outcasts 1310 63 <sup>rd</sup> St. Kenosha, WI 53144	Soutport Lighthouse Recovery Club 8017 Sheridan Rd. Kenosha, WI 53143 (262) 653-9800
Kenosha Alano Club Website: <a href="http://kenoshaalanoclub.org">http://kenoshaalanoclub.org</a>		
<b>District 36</b>		<b>Burlington 12 x 12 Club</b>
<b>West Racine/Kenosha County</b>		724 N. Pine St. Burlington, WI
<b>District 6</b>		<b>Walworth County Alano Club</b>
<b>Eastern Walworth County</b>		611 E. Walworth St. Delavan, WI 53115 (262) 740-1888
<b>District 12</b>		<b>Eastern Lake County, Illinois</b>
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: <a href="http://alanoclubwaukegan.com/">http://alanoclubwaukegan.com/</a>		
Waukegan Hotline: (847) 623-9660		
<b>District 10</b>		<b>Antioch Recovery Club</b>
<b>Western Lake County</b>		311 E Depot St.; Suite C Antioch, IL 60002 (847) 838-1882
Antioch Recovery Club: <a href="http://www.antiochrecoveryclub.org/">http://www.antiochrecoveryclub.org/</a>		
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	Toni M.
Secretary	VACANT
Co-Secretary	VACANT
Treasurer	Pam L.
Co-Treasurer	Jessica N.
Staffing Coordinator	John B.
Co-Staffing Coordinator	Bruce P.
Newsletter	Kevin B.
Co-Newsletter	Stacy K.
Hotline Chairperson	Mark S.
Co-Hotline Chairperson	Jason A.
Literature Chairperson	Rachel M.
Co-Literature Chair	Deb K.
Procurement	Steve K.
Webmaster	Courtney L.
Co-Webmaster	Brian K.
Advisor	Darrel S.
3701 Durand Avenue #225B	
Racine, WI 53403	
(262) 554-6611	
<b>24-Hour Hotline: (262) 554-7788</b>	

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