

A cup of coffee is the central focus, set against a vibrant, abstract background of overlapping geometric shapes in shades of blue, yellow, red, and purple. The coffee is a light brown color with a thin layer of foam on top. The overall composition is dynamic and colorful.

Outside the Bottle

November 2020

District 16 Newsletter

The Courage to Change

by GH

Hi, I'm Gary H. and I'd writing about Courage, which is defined by Webster's as "*mental or moral strength to venture, persevere, and withstand danger, fear, or difficulty*". I have always found this concept thought provoking and it sure sounds like something we all can use, right? Every alcoholic knows about danger, fear and difficulty through their own drinking experiences, so no need to give examples, but how do we deal with them?

Notice how Webster's implies uncertainty in the outcome. Your courage alone does not guarantee a good outcome, but it may be needed to even begin toward whatever outcome awaits. To me, the building blocks of courage are just hope and confidence. I cannot imagine having courage without having pre-existing hope or courage without self-confidence. However, I do not include faith, because faith implies a certainty of the outcome, or at least a great belief in that certainty. It's not courage if you don't recognize the risks.

Hope - Hope is a form of *encouragement* where *en* means "to cause. But hope is a passive and not active state, like wishful thinking and day dreaming. It alone won't get you there.

I think hope is something you receive from the outside. I do not see how anyone could build hope in isolation, without an outside influence, and for this argument I am including the spiritual as an outside influence. When someone enters AA because alcoholic experiences have left them busted, they are mostly hopeless, vulnerable, and confused. Through the fellowship, attending meetings and listening to others sharing their experience, hope and strength, that newcomer can begin hope.

Confidence – I think confidence is something you build from the inside. It's the basic "I can do this" attitude. People or experience give you some material to use, but they cannot give you the final product. It is by your hands that confidence is built. Prior to beginning their AA, people may or may not already possess self-confidence; I know I arrived with existing self-confidence developed through life accomplishments. But if you don't have it, it can be built through the AA Steps.

So adding these together and voila, courage can be realized. You want, visualize and dream of a better life, plus you believe you can do it. So you now can *venture, persevere, and withstand danger, fear, or difficulty*. You have the courage to change yourself despite an uncertain outcome. And maybe if your situation is dramatic enough, you can label it heroic! And you certainly may be heroic in the eyes of your loved ones if you show success in this endeavor.

Pitiful and Incomprehensible Demoralization

By DN

When I first began my journey in AA I specifically remember an old timer speaking about his experience of finally coming to a “pitiful and incomprehensible demoralization”. I was about twenty three years old at the time, closed minded and unwilling, and was completely unable to relate to anything that I was hearing. Years of continuous relapses and twenty plus treatment centers later I had finally experienced a pitiful and incomprehensible demoralization in myself, which is something that I never want to forget. The consequences early on in my alcoholism were minimal to me. Since this is a progressive disease my lifestyle followed and so did the consequences. I was doing things that I said I would never do and crossing lines that I swore I would never cross. The felonies and homelessness definitely sucked but it did not compare to the feeling of loosing all hope and the desire to live. That was my breaking point and a feeling that I must constantly remember in order to stay grateful.

As painful as the feeling was it can easily start to drift in my mind the farther away that I get and less involved I am in AA. If I start placing the majority of my energy on shinny things and what I think that I should have in my life then I am in a dangerous position, which is something I have struggled with numerous times. I have distanced myself from AA in the past and almost completely forgot about the painful feelings which got me sober. When I am in constant reminder of those feelings I am able to stay grateful for the beautiful life which AA has provided me today, which is honestly better than I ever imagined it could be. I need to stay in constant reminder of where I was, where I am today, and what has given me the life that I live today.

The best way for me to remind myself of how I felt about myself during active alcohol addiction is to help a newcomer. I specifically remember being new and people telling me that them helping me was actually helping themselves, and I never understood that at the time. The longer I stick around my perception of the program and the book evolves. My first sponsee definitely did not go as I planned it would in my head. It did however provide me with the biggest experience of gratitude that I have felt in AA. It is the biggest reminder of everything that I battled with during active alcoholism and early sobriety. Severe depression and hopelessness is no joke, and I forget that pain unless I am talking with someone who is battling with the same things which I did early on. “There but for the grace of god go I” was something I used to always hear, and that has stuck in my head every time I reach out to a newcomer. In short if I am not helping newcomers then I am not growing in AA, and if you are not growing you are dying. The biggest influence on my gratitude comes from working with a newcomer. It helps me more than I can put into words.

Keep on Trudgin'

By: Phil S.



Hey, Bob, what's the first thing you wrote on your gratitude list?



I wrote
"Being able to write a gratitude list."



Broad Highway

Done... and done. What does the good lord have next? May it please us as it shall be done whether we find joy in it or not.

With officers firmly in place, the business of the District continues. After a peaceful district election cycle, met with a great sense of comradery, there is much to be done. Atop the list is the continuing unification of the District.

We live in a time when group meetings can change from in-person to zoom, zoom to in-person and everything in between. Upon realizing such great variability, we are doing our best to find a contact for each group in the District. A GSR is great, yet any contact will do... a person to call for the most up-to-date meeting place and time. If you feel like being proactive, you may call (248) 817-6935 and leave a group's basic information with Daud Y or his voicemail. :)

That said, we will be reaching out. And let us find support amongst ourselves during the times to come in this great fellowship where once-desperate souls find solace and meaning to lives ready to be fulfilled. :)

Sincerely,
The GSRS of District 16

Anniversaries

Twice Gifted Woman's Group – Berkley
Chance for Recovery – Clawson
Go After your Sobriety – Berkley
Northbrook Group – Beverly Hills

Please send any meeting location/status updates to
district16news@gmail.com

We are self-supporting through our own contributions. The District, representing the overall conscience of 76 groups, is greatly appreciative for any funds of any amount. May we all be united together in spreading the message across this geographic area. If groups would like to donate funds to District 16, please mail a check or money order:

Must be made out to: District 16 of Area 33 AA
PO Box 725362
Berkley, MI 48072

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newsletter contributors!

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