

Outside the Bottle

District 16 Newsletter

March, 2021



Keeping the Connection in a Battle with Isolation

I have often heard that “the opposite of addiction is connection” which to me means that connection with other people and my higher power will allow me to live a sober life. During this past year isolation has been very difficult, and adapting this concept into my life has been more challenging than what it used to be. Without the pandemic, I would call folks in the fellowship, show up to a 12 step meeting, and there was always fellowship before and after the meeting.

Thinking back now, connection was easy when I set up a schedule and followed it every week. Prior to being in the program, I was an isolated drinker and would drink quietly by myself for weeks and weeks. When the pandemic changed everything, I found myself worrying that being by myself would cause those drinking thoughts to come back and push me to drink alone again. I’m very grateful to say that this did not happen, even though it wasn’t easy.

This program requires an amount of action in order to keep our sobriety. With working all the steps, I knew that with feeling a strong fear I would have to use the same amount of action to combat my fear and stay sober. First thing I did was reach out to more folks in the program than I typically would. We discussed how we were staying sober, and how things were going in general. Having those discussions daily really helped keep the connection, and now there are folks I talk to everyday like clockwork.

Additionally, I kept going to meetings, however I’m immunocompromised. I’m not able to go to meetings in person, but I went to zoom meetings to keep me connected and build additional relationships. On top of meetings, and reaching out, I worked the steps. A lot of our steps inspire connection with the fellowship, and our higher power. The step that inspires connection with the fellowship to cure isolation (in my opinion) is step Five. In the 12 & 12: Step Five (page 57) it states “What are we likely to receive from Step Five? For one thing, we shall get rid of that terrible sense of isolation we always had.” With writing my Fourth Step, I get awareness of who I am, and what I’m feeling. Then with completing Step Five I am finding connection with another alcoholic to help keep my addiction at bay. I am able to share myself wholeheartedly without judgement with another alcoholic. It cures this helpless feeling of loneliness because you find that there is someone you can relate to.

If you haven’t ready step five in the 12 & 12, I highly recommend it. Keeping connection with my higher power, I look to Step Three and have to consistently turn over my will to my higher power as I understand him. When I practice this step, I focus on what I can do today to be of service and continue on this path of sobriety. It keeps me grounded. I hope that all of you are staying safe out there, and use these tips to keep the connection to the program. We all need each other more than ever.

Asking for Help

I am the type of person who takes pride in being independent, a good problem solver, someone who likes to think outside the box. Some of you can probably relate. So, imagine my frustration when I couldn't figure out how to drink like a normal person! Like our book says, I tried every imaginable remedy I could think of. I tried therapy, exercise, mindfulness, meditation, anxiety and stress reduction methods. But I was never willing to quit drinking or even admit to anyone how much I really drank. I was also not willing to do things anyone else's way but mine. I was especially afraid of admitting I was an alcoholic. That seemed like a death sentence to me. Something I could not come back from.

One morning I woke up, drank the last tiny bit of alcohol left in my bottle from the night before, immediately got sick and just felt an overwhelming sense of defeat. I couldn't do it anymore. I didn't want to live and I didn't want to die. I had never felt this low and I was out of options and ideas. I couldn't imagine staying this miserable for the rest of my life. The only course of action that presented itself to me that day was to get honest and ask for help.

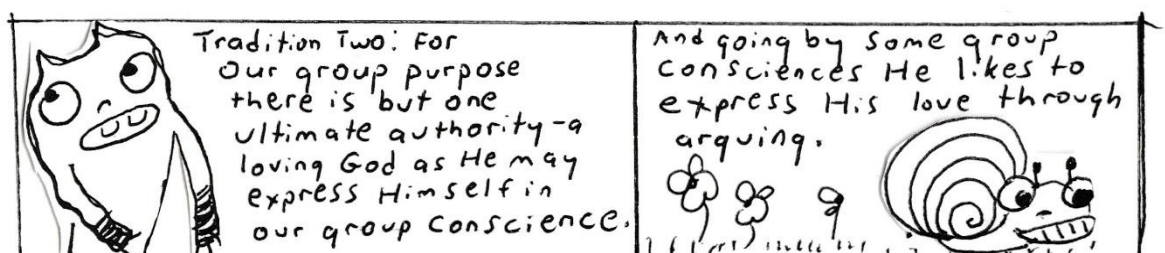
From that point forward, I asked for and accepted help often. The only child and alcoholic in me do not love asking for help, but I had to. This was new and scary to me, and the results were nothing like what I had expected. Admitting I was an alcoholic, which had always seemed so terrifying, actually felt so freeing. I was led to the doors of AA, and finally surrounded by people who felt like I did.

Through the program, I learned to rely on my sponsor, my Higher Power and other people for help. It has always been available to me if I am just willing to ask. In the beginning, I got a lot of practice asking for help after I learned that oftentimes my first thought or inclination may not be the right one. I learned to listen and try things a different way. I also learned the invaluable tool of pausing throughout my day, when agitated, and asking for the right thought or action.

Throughout the last few years, asking for help hasn't necessarily gotten easier for me. The phone still feels so heavy some days. The pandemic left me feeling disconnected from my fellows when I stopped being able to go to meetings in person as I had before. But the program adapted, and so did I. I think asking for help will likely always be a bit uncomfortable for me. The difference today is that I am more willing to push through those uncomfortable feelings.

I have learned so much about myself in my sobriety journey. Many of the things I feared about admitting I was an alcoholic simply were not true. It was not a death sentence. In fact, sobriety has given me a life today that I could have never imagined. Life can still be hard at times, but I could never have fathomed how much joy and fun this new way of life could have given me. It all started with the willingness to ask for help.

Keep on trudgin' by Phil R.



Announcements & Anniversaries

If your group is hosting an event, or if you or someone you know is celebrating an anniversary, please contact the newsletter and we will announce it on this page.

EVENTS

March Round Up
March 5th -7th
Registration \$7.00
Preregistration suggested
This is a virtual event

Area 33 meeting
March 14th
This is a virtual event

Michigan Mock Conference
March 27,2021
Mt. Pleasant, MI
Preregistration Available
This is a virtual event

Monday Night Afterglow
Sponsorship Panel Special Event
Monday, March 29th
Doors Open at 7:45 And are locked at 8:15
This is a virtual event

Outside the Bottle is the newsletter of District 16. The newsletter contains announcements, meeting changes, events, news and information around the district, short articles on sobriety and recovery, and even some humor.

All AA members are invited to submit material to the newsletter.

Please send correspondence or contributions to clevebro@yahoo.com

Remember this is your newsletter help us make it better- all suggestions or comments are gladly welcome



A Sincere thank you to
all newsletter
contributors!

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