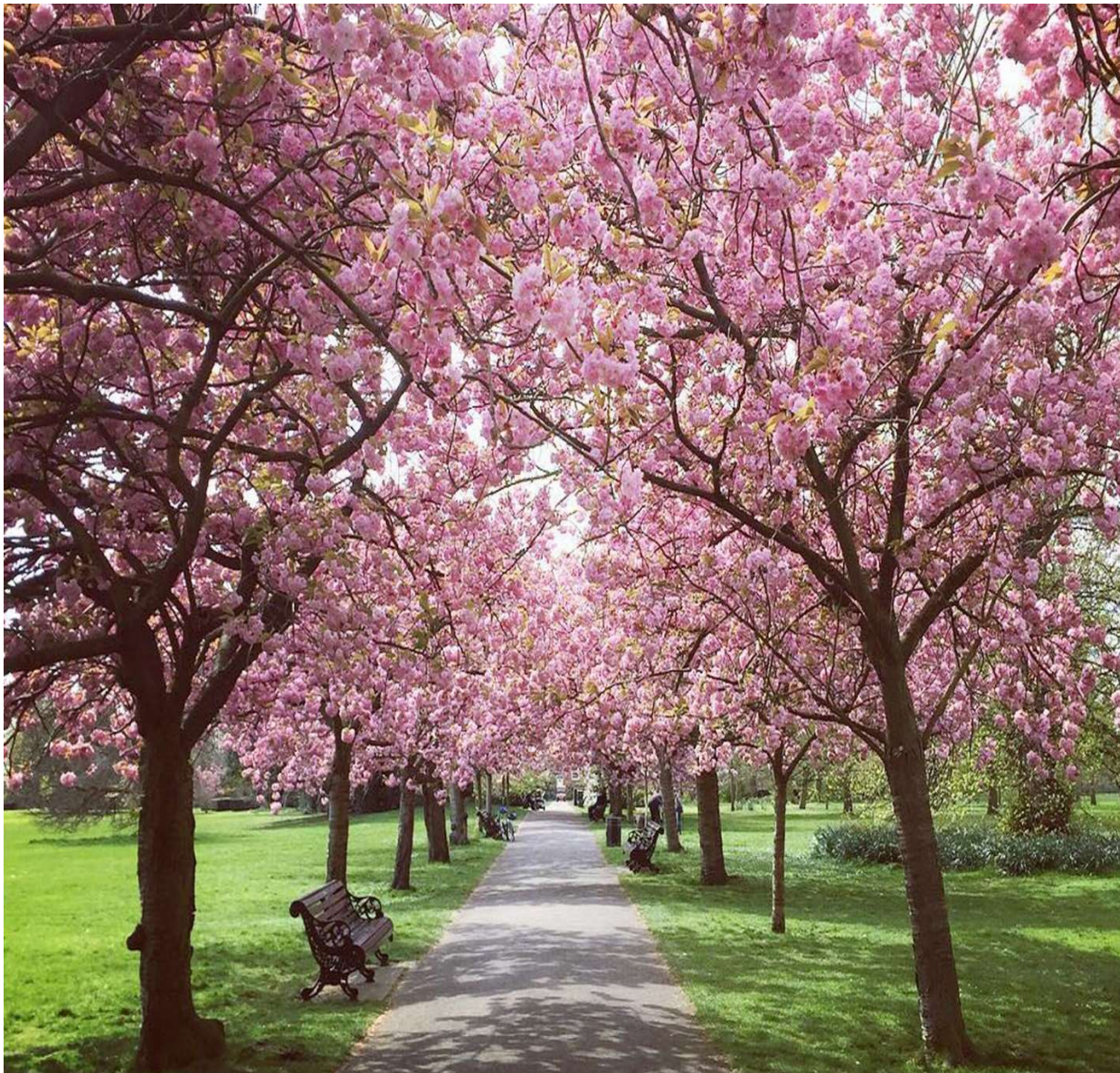


Outside the Bottle

District 16 Newsletter

April, 2021



SOBRIETY: A Woman's Journey

A little while after I came to AA, I joined a women's group that was so incredibly supportive to my recovery. We met at 10 am in a nice church that was a 20-minute ride from my warm bed on my day off. Inconvenient, because of the drive and the fact that I would have rather slept till noon. However, the women were so wonderful and as I got to know the women, the ropes in AA and deepened my sobriety it was like visiting with a warm, inviting friend – so satisfying.

We had upwards of 30 participants at one time. Eventually some of the regulars retired, passed on, moved out of state, and some of the young ladies dropped out, a few died from overdoses. Sorry to say that the numbers dwindled to just a few and then finally just 3 of us that were regular attendees and we closed the meeting. There are 3 other meetings at that church at different times of the day so it really was just us. The chemistry we had dissolved. Who can say why? I like to think we helped a few women find the honesty to continue to evolve into their best sober selves.

When I went to mixed meetings it was much more of a shock to my system. It takes a few months (years) for women to trust – both other women and men in sobriety. There is much more smoking at the door (pew!) and big gruff guys trying to show their genuine love for the program by hugging everyone and the stink gets all in your hair and clothes and I'm not comfortable getting touched by strangers. The chemistry is very different at mixed meetings especially for emotionally battered or desperate for love or sensitive women. Sometimes even walking in the door requires courage and nerves of steel.

From a paper entitled, "Does AA work differently for Men and Women," by John Kelly & Bettina Hoepfner (2012) it seems that fellowship within and outside the program of AA is a major factor in long term sobriety for males at 70% and for females at only 41%. We say at the outset of most meetings 'AA is a fellowship of men and women...' but it seems to work differently for the genders.

Men are likely to reduce their AA participation over time where women with a high ASI drug severity were less likely to participate in AA in general. Addiction Severity Index (ASI) is an assessment tool used for guidance in treatment planning. A large contributor to this disparity is that women lack **self-efficacy**.

According to Albert Bandura, self-efficacy is "the belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations." Self-efficacy is a person's belief in his or her ability to succeed in a particular situation.

That's just lacking confidence, right? Not exactly.

If 'confidence' in this context means having a strong belief, whether in something positive or negative, then self-efficacy is about having the strong, positive belief that you have the *capacity* and the *skills* to achieve your goals.

Some of the many causes of low self-esteem may include: Unhappy childhood where parents (or other significant people such as teachers) were extremely critical. Poor academic performance in school resulting in a lack of confidence. Ongoing stressful life event such as a relationship breakdown or financial trouble.

It is suggested that talk therapy is necessary while getting sober and maintaining sobriety for persons with underlying or early childhood trauma. Therapy is available on line since the pandemic and it doesn't have to be expensive.

As a continual sharing partner in Back to Basics meetings (women sharing with women and men sharing with men) I have heard numerous times, 'I've never understood the program before this – it all makes sense now.' I believe it's because there is a bit of feminine fellowship and lots of direction in the B2B format. Or in other words, women with a program able to share it with another woman on a personal level. It's also my experience that women need to learn to make amends to themselves more often than not. Additional help outside the program of AA is a great way to figure out how to get rid of the guilt, shame and embarrassment that comes with being a woman in the man's world of AA and having a treatable disease in the greater world. Whether it is reading lots of sober titles and/or getting a therapist you can trust, gaining a great Higher Power of your understanding is key to lengthy sobriety.

Thank goodness for zoom meetings. I've watched people get sober while only zooming and, I assume, reading at home. Remarkable! I know that I am perfectly happy to share my experience, strength and hope via zoom for the rest of my days. There are others who feel this way for various reasons and I know this technological advance will continue.

I'm still looking for the pleasant intimacy of a great women's group and I know I'll be rewarded in my search.

Alcoholism and Hope, Through the Eyes of Lincoln

On February 22, 1842 a young Abraham Lincoln, at the time an Illinois State Congressman, delivered a “Temperance” speech to the Springfield Illinois Washingtonians. If you are not familiar with the Washingtonians movement, read the 10th Tradition in the [Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions](#).

I would like to share the 21st paragraph of his long 27-paragraph speech. In this paragraph, Abraham Lincoln shares his thoughts on alcohol and the alcoholic. I found his insight and observations fascinating, especially from someone of that era.

Abraham Lincoln had an incredible vocabulary, and his sentence structure is quite different from today’s standards. His writing can be a challenge to read and comprehend. After spending some time with a dictionary and consulting with my brother and sister, I think I understand what he was trying to tell us.

Below you will find a sentence-by-sentence breakdown of this one paragraph. I have added my own interpretation for each sentence below Congressman Lincoln’s. It was a fun exercise, and I would encourage you to do the same.

In my judgment, such of us as have never fallen victims, have been spared more by the absence of appetite, than from any mental or moral superiority over those who have.

Abraham Lincoln is saying that he is fortunate to not be an alcoholic. It is not his mental or moral superiority that has kept him from that fate. It is the luck of not having the compulsion, the obsession for the alcohol. Alcoholics are victims, to be helped and supported, not people of a failed character that should be condemned.

Indeed, I believe, if we take habitual drunkards as a class, their heads and their hearts will bear an advantageous comparison with those of any other class.

Alcoholics as a group, tend to be a smart and caring people.

There seems ever to have been a proneness in the brilliant, and warm-blooded to fall into this vice.

It seems that those who are intelligent, and kindhearted are predisposed to become alcoholics.

The demon of intemperance ever seems to have delighted in sucking the blood of genius and of generosity.

Alcoholism, the demon, seems to enjoy slowly killing these intelligent and caring people; draining away their ability to think or care.

What one of us but can call to mind some dear relative, more promising in youth than all his fellows, who has fallen a sacrifice to his rapacity?

We all have witnessed a dear friend or family member who showed great potential, only to be seized and slowly destroyed by the disease of alcoholism.

He ever seems to have gone forth, like the Egyptian angel of death, commissioned to slay if not the first, the fairest born of every family.

Alcoholism, like an ancient evil curse, strikes out and dooms good men and women throughout every community.

Shall he now be arrested in his desolating career? In that arrest, all can give aid that will; and who shall be excused that *can*, and will not?

Can we stop alcoholism from spreading pain and despair throughout the community? Everyone who is capable should help to stop this disease. There is no excuse for those who withhold aid/intervention when they can do so.

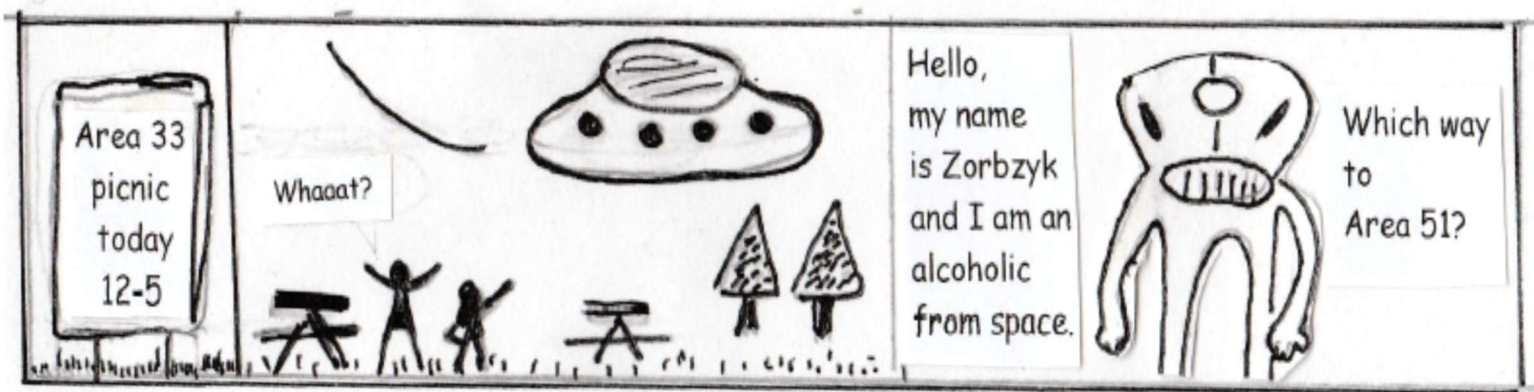
Far around as human breath has ever blown, he keeps our fathers, our brothers, our sons, and our friends, prostrate in the chains of moral death. From the beginning of human history, alcoholism has shackled our loved ones and friends to a life of degrading submission and moral decay.

To all the living every where we cry, "come sound the moral resurrection trump, that these may rise and stand up, an exceeding great army" -- "Come from the four winds, O breath! and breathe upon these slain, that they may live."

To all the sober living people everywhere, sound the trumpets for a new day of revival. Let us all come together as a great force, and let that force breathe new life into those afflicted so they may live a proud and meaningful life.

Marty M.

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

Area 33 meeting
April 11th
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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