

# The Eye pener

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Your Experience, Strength, and Hope via the Written Word

## First AA Meeting

**I didn't want** to go to a meeting in the town where I lived in case I bumped into someone I knew. I thought that would be extremely embarrassing. It was as if I were coming out of the closet but didn't want to let anyone I knew find out. This makes me smile now. Of course, I honestly didn't know if I was an alcoholic, but I was in a very bad situation and had run out of better ideas. I had told my doctor that I thought I had a drinking problem, and they put me in touch with a UVM study that had me call in every day and tell them how many drinks I had had. There was no counseling, no human contact as far as I remember. I wasn't able to stop drinking – big surprise.

So, I went to the large meeting in the next town, and who should I see but my son's beloved Little League coach. We had volunteered in the snack bar together, and I had a very high opinion of him and his wife. I was puzzled. How could this great guy be here? He was just as surprised to see me.

It was a double speaker meeting. I looked for a woman who looked kind and approachable and let her know it was my first meeting. She gave me a copy of the Big Book, and we exchanged phone numbers. I thought, "Well, this isn't so hard," but I didn't see how I would magically stop craving alcohol by coming and sitting and listening to people.

She asked me to read *The Doctor's Opinion*, and again I thought, "OK, so now what?" She encouraged me to attend a Step meeting, which I did, but they were not on Step One, so it didn't make much sense. She encouraged me to find a sponsor as she was a temporary one, and I did. My new sponsor educated me about the actual work that I would be doing.

I will always be grateful that I had the gift of desperation but honestly believe that my Higher Power got me to my first meeting as I was very scared to even check it out. What I found there were warm, kind, and helpful people who started me on my road to recovery. I will always be grateful for that meeting and those people.



~Anonymous

Give It a Go

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## Resentments

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**No one likes** to realize that they have strayed away from living serenely and let a resentment simmer in their mind. I believe they can creep in slowly, yet before we know it, what we could laugh at yesterday now is not funny at all. Before we know it, we have worked ourselves up into a lather, and it has all happened in our heads.

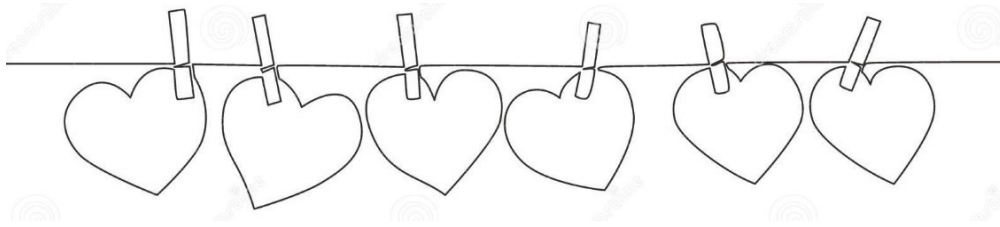
We all remember taking our fourth step. We worked hard at being thorough and, at least for this alcoholic, there was a lot of stress about taking the fifth step with my sponsor. I was so gung-ho about everything AA when I first began. I was diligent and went to my weekly Step, Living Sober, As Bill sees it, and Speaker meetings each week. I felt like I was living and breathing the program. My relations in and

out of work all benefited from what I was learning.

As time passed, just like a relationship, the program became a seamless part of my life, but I didn't feel as if I was on fire. I enjoyed my meetings, my AA friends, and service opportunities. Life went on with its challenges and ups and downs. I was able to handle life on life's terms without drinking for six and half years. (p. 3)



Please visit us at [www.burlingtonaa.org](http://www.burlingtonaa.org) for more local stories and meeting information.



I got into some trouble that I blamed 100% on myself, couldn't handle the pain I caused myself, and took a few sips. All the horrible and sad moments I thought I had left behind forever returned to me in a flash, and I was able to have a one-day, two-sip slip. I was lucky. My resentment was at myself. I had been foolish and couldn't forgive myself. I learned that I had to be able to do that if I was going to stay sober as I was likely to do something foolish again.

Now when I start to get irritable or discontent, I know that a resentment is right nearby waiting for me to have an emotional slip and indulge in bad behavior. We are humans, and just because we are in AA doesn't prevent us from struggling with anything a nonalcoholic does.

When I get irritated now, I try to take a long, hard look at why I am getting irritated. Am I envious? Am I angry? Generally, I believe resentments

can come most easily out of the basic fact that life is not fair. The idea that life is not a level playing field - but that is nothing new. The beauty of this program is that we are given the tools to live each day as a gift, and what we do with it is our gift to our Higher Power.

~Anonymous  
Give It a Go

## Give It a Go

### Open ~ All Are Welcome

Saturday | 8:00 a.m. | Living Sober

In-Person: First Congregational Church 39 Main St, Essex Junction

Wheelchair Accessible

Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/323523855>

**Download or print the AA Vermont Districts  
2 & 11 [meeting list](#).**

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## Humility – What Is It?

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**I always thought** that I was a humble person. I can honestly say that appearing to be humble was taught to me at a very young age as extremely important. It was emphasized especially at church not to think of oneself as better than anyone else and never ever to brag. As a young emerging alcoholic, feeling as if I was superior to anyone was not a problem. I was born with low self-esteem, and it continued throughout my life until I was able to work on it in recovery.

One of the many things AA has taught me is that appearances and reality are not the same thing. I was raised in a para-alcoholic home which means my parents themselves were not active alcoholics but there were alcoholics in their families, so they were affected by the disease too. In my father's case it was his father and in my mother's case it was her brother. In my family, appearances were really all that counted. We were well groomed, well fed, well educated and taken to church every week.

What does this have to do with humility, you might ask? Well, I desperately wanted my parents' love which clearly required their approval. I worked super hard to get into a college that would please them. My low self-esteem made it impossible for me to be anything but unhappy and insecure most of the time after I go there. I was surrounded by truly confident, talented people, and I never felt as if I was anyone's equal. I also wanted to attend a prestigious school as I thought this is what will bring you outward success and that is necessary to make you happy.



I set out on my adult life to achieve something I could point to and say, "See – I am now a success, and all that insecurity is in the past. I have arrived." I had no idea I had this disease brewing in me, and it was already driving the car. I thought I was smart, brave, strong and humble. I was not. With each achievement I felt my low self-esteem slip away bit by bit and be replaced by a kind of bold confidence. "Look" – I wanted to say – "I can be a success." As I made more money and became a manager of others, I felt very proud of myself. My humility was gone. I felt that I had achieved something due to my hard work and abilities.

When my world fell apart as a direct result of being an active alcoholic, and I joined AA at the age of 49, my self-confidence vanished, and I felt humiliated. Feeling humiliated is painful, while feeling humble is a very peaceful feeling. AA taught me that true humility comes from the simple understanding that we are no better or worse than anyone else. It was provocative to me to think of striving to be just a worker among workers. I thought the name of the game was to try to get on top. Thank you AA for helping me get right sized and humble for probably the first time in my life.

*~Janet Astore*

Give It a Go

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### Eye Opener Committee

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