

The Eye pener

Vol 25 No. 4 - April 2025

Your Experience, Strength, and Hope via the Written Word

Nothing Wasted

A.A. has proven to me that a power greater than myself can restore me to sanity. Similar to how a good night's sleep can restore me to a rested state, every day that I am blessed to wake up, I get to a point where I need to be restored to sanity. Actually, that is true every single moment. Am I relying on a power greater than myself, or not?

Our founders tell us that our insane alcohol use, in all its forms (alcohol and drugs), is only a symptom of our alcoholism. Before I got sober, alcohol in all its forms was the only solution to a problem I didn't know I had - alcoholism. The nature of my use - obsession over alcohol in all its forms and consistent remorse about my relentless obsession and maddening inability to stop on my own - convinced me that maybe I do belong in A.A., and maybe A.A. could help me too.

The most profound experience I've had in A.A. so far happened during a conversation with my sponsor at the time. I told her I was afraid of keeping secrets, but that I had a secret I was so ashamed of and the thought of disclosing it to anyone was excruciatingly

terrifying. Then she told me about an experience she had of similar nature, something that she did in her past. When I heard what she told me and compared mine with hers, I thought, "Well... if she can tell me that, then I can DEFINITELY tell her mine." She showed me that my painful past has immense value because, when used properly, it can help somebody else. She helped me feel safe to tell her my secret.



A conversation with another alcoholic is a power greater than myself, because it's more than me alone. Sometimes I forget that A.A. started with that - two alcoholics having a conversation, one seeking to help the other.

I imagine it felt good for my sponsor to see how comfortable she made me feel by telling me about her past. I imagine it helped her find value in an event that I imagine has brought her pain before. By helping me, she was helped. By letting her help me, I helped her. We help each other by letting ourselves be helped.

~Olivia W.

Early Bird Group

THE ARTICLES CONTAINED HEREIN ARE PERSONAL ACCOUNTS OF INDIVIDUALS' EXPERIENCES.

THEY DO NOT REFLECT THE OPINIONS OR POSITIONS OF THE MEMBERS OF THE EYE OPENER COMMITTEE OR A.A. AS A WHOLE.

The Arsenal of Sobriety

During World War II, The US became known as “the arsenal of democracy.” Alcoholics Anonymous has become an “arsenal of sobriety” with an array of tools to help me stay sober. We speak of the AA toolbox, and I am grateful to have same since my first day of sobriety - July 29, 2002.

I recall with fondness how so many of AA's tools and resources helped keep me sober. Of course, had not someone passed it on to me, I would not have learned that in order to keep it, I must give it away.

The Living Sober book is now 50 years old. As I say often, that book saved my life in early sobriety. I need not tell you how in detail, but it had an answer for every difficulty, adventure, or event that I faced for the first time without a drink.

Just as tools and trucks and cars and machines cannot run without fuel, so too must I continue to have

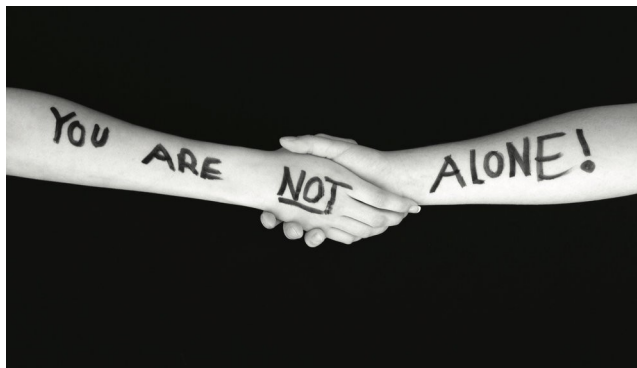
the high-grade fuel of Alcoholics Anonymous. Of course, the primary “fuel tank” is my Higher Power, the Divine Resource that never diminishes. Sobriety requires that I have a well-supplied “knapsack” of “survival gear.” Some of that gear can be carried in my wallet: the famous “white card” with the preamble and the steps and traditions, which is available to use for a meeting anytime, anyplace in weather fair or foul. And we have the benefit of the “little red book,” which is chock full of passages, slogans, topics, portions of AA literature including the steps, traditions, and the promises.

I regard a local meeting list as another reservoir of fuel or, as I say, “ammunition” for sobriety. The American Express commercials used to say about the card, “Don’t leave home without it.” I follow that advice with meeting lists. I always “pack” meeting lists; invariably

bly I have run into people who have “needed a meeting” or asked where the “next one was” and passed the list on.

Of course, our Grapevine magazine is a handy tool, and many of us know people who have become sober by finding a random copy of the Grapevine or, as one friend says, picked up one from a garbage can. Someone thought they didn't need it or didn't want it or tossed it in anger; a friend found what someone thought was trash but turned out to be gold.

Many of us have cherished cards or AA items given to us by sponsors of other friends of AA. I used to say a man named Pat S. “unsuccessfully” 12th-stepped me in another place. Not so. That 12 step work led to my sobriety. And shortly thereafter, Pat sent me a copy of Dr. Bob's last talk. I have had it ever since, and while it is crumpled and falling apart, I never fail to take it when I am called upon to speak. (p. 3)



Please visit the AA Vermont Districts 2 & 11

The law of conservation of matter says that, in the universe, matter is neither created nor destroyed. And a similar law applies to energy. Thus nothing is wasted, whether it is a piece of AA literature, or something said to a newcomer, and most certainly prayers said for recovery. AA has weathered many storms, and when the pandemic shut down live meetings, AA was there to produce Zoom meetings. We have all kinds of resources - including talks and videos - and online literature available to anybody in the world anytime of the day or night. The world of AA literature, whether it is produced by AA World Services or The Grapevine

publishing arm, is available to sustain and inspire us to keep sober and help others to achieve sobriety.

We have our stockpile, our arsenal, our huge toolbox. And we know these supplies are there for the taking, but, more importantly, for carrying the message. And we have this publication, the Eye Opener. We are never lacking for "fuel" for sobriety.

Sure, I often wax poetic about AA to the extent it is a form of organizational pride. It is a form of gratitude for all those who have given

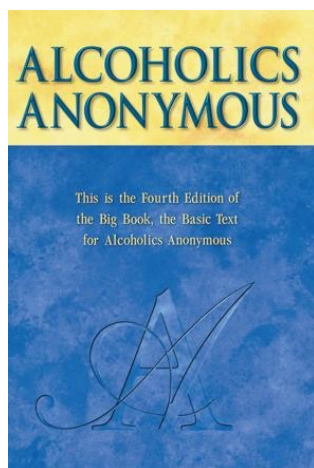
us the badly needed resources. As I have encouraged people to write for the Eye Opener, I say often that you never know how it will help others.

"Practical experience shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking as intensive work other alcoholics, it works when other activities fail." (Big Book, 4th ed., p. 89).

Thankfully, AA provides us with the "tools of the trade" for such work... on myself and with others.

~Dennis McM.

Brown Bag Group



Brown Bag Group

Open ~ All Are Welcome

Mon.-Fri. 12:00 pm | Sat.-Sun. 1:00 pm

First Congregational Church, 39 Main St., Essex Junction

Wheelchair Accessible

Don't Leave Before the Miracle Happens

I am very proud to be a member of AA and am very impressed by our history and our General Service Office which facilitates AA groups and services throughout the world in many languages, in many forms of media, and in places where alcoholism strikes.

It is a miracle that I took my last drink on July 29, 2002, found AA in Vermont, and work all the steps in my life. It's not about me, but, for example, AA is the only organization, activity, practice, association, with which I have stuck with the longest period of time. I have not lost interest and have never reduced or slowed down my adherence or my activity.

For me AA is not a fellowship I joined; it is a way of life. The lessons of AA, the slogans, the quotations from the Big Book, the memories of the help and advice given to me by old timers, the way that AA friends have stepped up to the plate when needed, is a continuing source of miraculous amazement.

There are several references to "miracles" in our literature. The Big Book says, "The age of miracles is still with us." (p. 153) We are told, "We, who have recovered from serious drinking are miracles of mental health." (p. 133)

Bill recalls seeing his old friend and drinking buddy, Ebby T, "Never mind the musty past; here sat a miracle directly across the kitchen table." (p. 11) I used to pass by the location of that conversation many times while going to and from drinking establishments. Little did I realize that years later I would experience a miracle, the first of many, really including the cessation of alcohol, a genuine spiritual experience at Maple Leaf Farm, and, later, a spiritual awakening as a result of working the steps and participating in all aspects of AA.

Each one of us who has remained sober can recount many miracles which we often share with others who have had similar experiences. "My miracle occurred when I became willing to go to any length to take action." (Grapevine Quote of the Day, Dec. 24, 2019)

Any AA topic can lead to many others and how all in all they revolve around the same fact for us. Consider what Bill Wilson wrote in the How It Works chapter, "Our description of the alcoholic, the chapter to the agnostic, and our personal adventures before and after make clear three pertinent ideas: (a) That we were alcoholic and could not manage our own lives. (b) That probably no human power could have relieved our alcoholism (c) That God could and would if He were sought." (Alcoholics Anonymous, p. 59)

I had access to AA meetings seven days a week taking places at locations as close as a church across the street, a church right next to my building, and never more than a few blocks away. Despite that, I had to come hundreds of miles where suddenly and unexpectedly God removed the obsession from alcohol, and I learned that the obsession could and would come back if I did not work the program of Alcoholics Anonymous contained in our 12 steps. It says in the 12 and 12, "AA's Twelve Steps are a group of principles spiritual in their nature which, if practiced as a way of life, can expel the obsession to drink and enable the sufferer to become happily and usefully whole."

And it's because I practice the steps as a way of life that the miracle continues.

~Dennis McM.

Brown Bag Group

Eye Opener Committee

Districts 2 & 11 Vermont

Founder	Erwin L.
Co-Chair for District 2	Olivia W.
Co-Chair for District 11	Ali J.

Please visit us at www.burlingtonaa.org for more

local stories and meeting information.