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# Pass It On

The Cape Atlantic Intergroup Newsletter January-February, 2013 – Issue 1

*From the July 1944 Grapevine*

## On Cultivating Tolerance by Dr. Bob

During nine years in AA, I have observed that those who follow the Alcoholics Anonymous program with the greatest earnestness and zeal not only maintain sobriety but often acquire finer characteristics and attitudes as well. One of these is tolerance. Tolerance expresses itself in a variety of ways: in kindness and consideration toward the man or woman who is just beginning the march along the spiritual path; in the understanding of those who perhaps have been less fortunate in educational advantages; and in sympathy toward those whose religious ideas may seem to be in great variance with our own.

I am reminded in this connection of the pictures of a hub with its radiating spokes. We all start at the outer circumference and approach our destination by one of many routes. To say that one spoke is much better than all the other spokes is true only in the sense of its being best suited to you as an individual. Human nature is such that without some degree of tolerance, each one of us might be inclined to believe that we have found the best or perhaps the shortest spoke. Without some tolerance, we might tend to become a bit smug or superior – which, of course is not helpful to the person we are trying

*cont'd on page 4*

### Local Voices... from the heart

## The Gift of Silence

Today I listen for that small voice that is deep down within me. The one that makes me smile because I know that what I hear running through my head is what is right. I get many thoughts that run through my head on almost a continual basis. When I first got sober, I could not trust these thoughts, because the things they told me were not wise or even true. At first, my thoughts told me I was worthless and that I was a loser. I cringe at the recollection of how many times I sabotaged my success by listening to thoughts that told me “do it later, this is more important” as I pointlessly surfed the web or did some other meaningless task.

In order to hear the small voice within me, I had to first quiet the other noise in my head and the noise in my surroundings. How many times do we do this on a regular basis? How many of us always have the TV on or the radio on in the car. It becomes a real habit to always have that background noise on. Why? Do we fear the silence? When we have background noise surrounding us, we can “check out” and detach from the here and now. Our eyes glaze over and we are

*cont'd on page 2*

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### Trivia Question...

What was Bill and Lois Wilson's frequent mode of transportation?

*Answer on page 3!*

~ Breathe.

**Gift** *cont'd from page 1*

someplace else as we hum to a tune we like. Or we are perched on the edge of our seats as we listen to the hype coming at us from the TV: "stay tuned for the latest miracle discovery of ...".

With the help of others, we can learn to un-clench and to focus on our breath during periods of meditation. This helps us to relax and to be fully aware; to be in the present moment and open to direction from our Higher Power.

One technique to quiet the noise in our head is to focus on the space between our thoughts. As we practice this, the quiet periods become longer, and the space between random thoughts deeper and richer. I like to pray before I practice this. I let my Higher Power know I am asking for knowledge of His will, that I am seeking to understand and that I am available to help bring about His plans. Then occasionally, after quieting my mind and listening for that small voice, I get "V-8 moments", an inspiration to do something that is clearly an answer to some dilemma I am wrestling with. I wish I could say that I always act on these inspirations.

After praying and meditating, reflection on what we have heard allows us to make choices. Reflection is the study of ways to put the answers we get from prayer and meditation into action.

Why not give yourself the gift of silence today? The next time you are alone in your car, turn off the radio and check out the clouds instead.

**Special Note:**

The material in this newsletter does not necessarily represent Cape-Atlantic Intergroup. Much of it has been contributed by individual members with the intention of passing the message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

Make extra time to be alone. Try it outside whenever possible, alone with nature. Listen to the gift of silence.

*Shirl R. Trudgers, Absecon*

### How To Meditate In 3 Easy Steps

Step 11 suggests that we seek "through constant prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understand Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out."

For me, the prayer was easier than the meditation. Prayer is talking to God, and meditation is listening for God. I thought this easy outline for meditation might help:

The practice of meditation has been around for thousands of years, but we have just as much need for it today, with our busy lifestyles, as the mystics seeking enlightenment in ancient times.



Learning how to meditate is one of the best ways to learn to relax and eliminate stress and, unlike medication, there are no nasty side effects. There are many different types of meditation from the extremely complex to the relatively simple but I'm going to show you a quick and easy method which anybody can learn in a few minutes.

First, find a quiet place where you won't be disturbed for about 10 to 15 minutes and sit in a straight-backed chair.

*Gud*  
qi meg slik *Sinnsto*  
at jeg formår å godla de ting  
jeg ikke kan  
forandre...  
*Alt* til å forandre  
de ting jeg kan  
*og Forstand* til å se  
forskjellen...

Place your feet on the floor and rest your hands comfortably on your lap. Sit upright and imagine a thread pulling the top of your head up toward the ceiling (no slouching allowed!)

Now, imagine that your belly is a balloon - as you breathe in, the balloon expands and as you breathe out the balloon collapses in toward your spine. This breathing method ensures that you'll be using your diaphragm instead of your chest muscles which promotes greater relaxation.

Concentrate on the movement of your belly, expanding and contracting, and also on the sound of your breath as it goes in and out of your mouth.

Continue for about ten to fifteen minutes, then open your eyes but don't stand up straight away, wait for a few moments to re-orient yourself first. Congratulations! You now know how to meditate.

Try to do this technique twice a day for a week and you'll be amazed at how more relaxed and less stressed you feel. In fact you may feel so good that you'll want to make meditation a permanent part of your life.

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*<http://alcoholic-anonymous.blogspot.com/2007/05/how-to-meditate-in-3-easy-steps.html>*

*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* has suggestions for beginning meditation, starting with the Prayer of St. Francis:

### **PRAYER of ST. FRANCIS**

Lord, make me a channel of thy peace;  
that where there is hatred, I may bring love;  
that where there is wrong, I may bring the spirit of forgiveness;  
that where there is discord, I may bring harmony;  
that where there is error, I may bring truth;  
that where there is doubt, I may bring faith;  
that where there is despair, I may bring hope;  
that where there are shadows, I may bring light;  
that where there is sadness, I may bring joy.  
Lord, grant that I may seek rather to comfort than to be comforted;  
to understand, than to be understood;  
to love, than to be loved.  
For it is by self-forgetting that one finds.  
It is by forgiving that one is forgiven.  
It is by dying that one awakens to eternal life.  
Amen.

“As beginners in meditation, we might now reread this prayer several times very slowly, savoring every word and trying to take in the deep meaning of each phrase and idea. It will help if we can drop all resistance to what our friend says. For in meditation, debate has no place. We rest quietly with the thoughts of someone who knows, so that we may experience and learn.” *Page 99-100*

Answer to the Trivia Question...

### **A Harley Davidson Motorcycle**

“Bill and Lois went scouting investments during the mid-1920’s on their Harley Davidson. Lois often remarked that Bill usually let Lois drive while he sat in the side car. She said Bill preferred her doing the driving. Lois was really the Harley rider but Bill showed off here.”



“It is cold in April riding a motorcycle without a windshield, but breathing in the ozone as we whiz along is most invigorating! When sitting on the driver’s seat and turning on the gas I feel as if the whole world were mine. The sense of power, somehow not the machine’s but mine, is tremendous.”

Lois Wilson

*“Diary of Two Motorcycle Hobos”*



# **Mr. SponsorPants**

an AA sponsor blog

## **Problem with Step 11 Meditation**

Dear Mr. SponsorPants,

I am having trouble with the meditation part of Step 11. The trouble part is that I can not sit still. Have you ever had a sponsee tell you that? What did you tell them?

What did I tell them? I told them, in a word, “Bull\*\*it.”

But that was because I knew them. I knew that it was very unlikely they had a medically based profoundly physical reason for not being able to sit still. So... if that is true for you also, then again I say, “Bull\*\*it.”

(If not, then this is a whole different issue -- but I’m going to proceed on the assumption that your situation is not medical or you would have included that information in the email.)

So, in that case...

Imagine you’re on a game show; one of the competition-based reality things like “Survivor,” not one of those psychological mud-wrestling fests like the many “People Behaving Badly” shows.

The camera closes in on you, and the next challenge is announced: You will earn \$1000 for every minute you sit perfectly still. Ready? Set? Go!

From this, two things would probably be revealed:

1. Watching people sit still makes for terrible television.  
and

2. When you really set your mind to it, you can probably sit still for a good number of minutes.

Now I’m sure I don’t have to tell you there are all kinds of meditation, and sitting still is not a requirement -- or even a goal -- for many of them. Some Buddhists walk, some Dervishes whirl, artists create... but if you’re asking about being still, then you have a particular type of meditation discipline and outcome in mind.

There are only about ten bajillion books, blogs, apps, classes and yogis out there to light the way in meditation practice, any of whom would be more instructive than I could be here. I can tell you what I have shared with sponsees, which is that I have found deep, conscious breathing, an egg timer, managing my expectations (good luck with that!) and starting slow has helped me -- and many a fidgeter -- explore the Stillness which, paradoxically, can be so freeing.

Good luck.

Mr. SponsorPants



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see more Mr. SponsorPants at <http://mrsponsorpants.typepad.com>

# CapeAtlanticInterGroup

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Visit our website: [www.caigrp.org](http://www.caigrp.org) for  
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## UPCOMING EVENTS

Flyers for most events may be downloaded at [caigrp.org](http://caigrp.org)

If you have an event that you would like to appear in *Pass It On*, please forward it to [newsletter@caigrp.org](mailto:newsletter@caigrp.org). Remember, because our publication is bi-monthly, announcements should be made well in advance.

Saturday  
February 9,  
8:00 pm -  
11:30 p.m.

### Sober Valentine Dance Party

Twelfth Step House • N. Wildwood Community Center

10th & Central Avenues • N. Wildwood, NJ

“Sharing the Freedom of Sobriety at the Jersey Shore”

FUN - FOOD - MUSIC - FELLOWSHIP - DANCING

SPECIAL PRIZES - Donation \$10.00 at the door

## Tolerance *(cont'd from page 1)*

to help and may be quite painful or obnoxious to others. No one of us wishes to do anything that might act as a deterrent to the advancement of another – and a patronizing attitude can readily slow up this process.

Tolerance furnishes, as a by-product, a greater freedom from the tendency to cling to preconceived ideas and stubbornly adhered-to opinions.

In other words, it often promotes and open-mindedness that is vastly important – is, in fact, a prerequisite to the successful termination of any line of search, whether it be scientific or spiritual.

These, then, are a few of the reasons why an attempt to acquire tolerance should be made by each one of us.

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**New service opening...** Devon M., our H&I (Hospitals and Institutions) Chair is leaving the area. We wish her the best and would like to thank her for her service! If you are interested in this service position, please contact Bill T., Intergroup Chair.

*Perpetual quietness of heart. It is to have no trouble. It is never to be frustrated or vexed, irritable or sore; to wonder at nothing that is done to me, to feel nothing done against me. It is to be at rest when nobody praises me, and when I am blamed or despised, it is to have a blessed home in myself where I can go in and shut the door and pray to my father in secret and be at peace, as in a deep sea of calmness, when all around and about is seeming trouble.*

*Inscription from plaque on Dr. Bob's desk, which to him best described humility.*

## Service Opportunities

### 24 HR. Hotline Help

Volunteer from home (minimum one year continuous sobriety) or at the office (six months). Two-hour slots. Subs are always needed. Contact Beth R. at [caigphone@caigrp.org](mailto:caigphone@caigrp.org)  
**Newsletter**  
Send new events, articles and your favorite meeting quotes to Nancy O. at [newsletter@caigrp.org](mailto:newsletter@caigrp.org)

### Hospitals & Institutions

Need volunteers to carry the message into treatment centers and correctional facilities. Ask your Intergroup Rep for details or contact Devon at [hichair@caigrp.org](mailto:hichair@caigrp.org)  
**12th Step Call Group**  
Help people who have reached out and called our hotline. Sign up at [www.caigrp.org](http://www.caigrp.org)

### Public Information/ Cooperation with the Professional Community

CAIG reaches out to the local community, providing speakers and information to schools, organizations and businesses. Please contact Vinnie at [pichair@caigrp.org](mailto:pichair@caigrp.org) if you are interested in helping.