



This is the substance of a revealing letter which Bill Wilson wrote several years ago to a close friend who also had troubles with depression. The letter appeared in the "Grapevine" 1953.

EMOTIONAL SOBRIETY

"I think that many oldsters who have put our AA "booze cure" to severe but successful tests still find they often lack emotional sobriety. Perhaps they will be the spearhead for the next major development in AA, the development of much more real maturity and balance (which is to say, humility) in our relations with ourselves, with our fellows, and with God.

Since AA began, I've taken immense wallops in all these areas because of my failure to grow up emotionally and spiritually. My God, how painful it is to keep demanding the impossible, and how very painful to discover, finally, that all along we have had the cart before the horse. Then comes the final agony of seeing how awfully wrong we have been, but still finding ourselves unable to get off the emotional merry-go-round.

How to translate a right mental conviction into a right emotional result, and so into easy, happy and good living. Well, that's not only the neurotic's problem, it's the problem of life itself for all of us who have got to the point of real willingness to hew to right principles in all of our affairs.

Even then, as we hew away, peace and joy may still elude us. That's the place so many of us AA oldsters have come to. And it's a hell of a spot, literally. How shall our unconscious, from which so many of our fears, compulsions and phony aspirations still stream, be brought into line with what we actually believe, know and want! How to convince our dumb, raging and hidden 'Mr. Hyde' becomes our main task.

I've recently come to believe that this can be achieved. I believe so because I begin to see many benighted ones, folks like you and me, commencing to get results. Last autumn, depression, having no really rational cause at all, almost took me to the cleaners. I began to be scared that I was in for another long chronic spell. Considering the grief I've had with depressions, it wasn't a bright prospect.

I kept asking myself "Why can't the twelve steps work to release depression?" By the hour, I stared at the St. Francis Prayer ... "it's better to comfort than to be comforted." Here was the formula, alright, but why didn't it work? Suddenly, I realized what the matter was. My basic flaw had always been dependence, almost absolute dependence, on people or circumstances to supply me with prestige, security, and the like. Failing to get these things according to my perfectionist dreams and specifications, I had fought for them. And when defeat came, so did my depression.

There wasn't a chance of making the outgoing love of St. Francis a workable and joyous way of life until these fatal and almost absolute dependencies were cut away. Because I had over the years undergone a little spiritual development, the absolute quality of these frightful dependencies had never before been so starkly revealed. Reinforced by what grace I could secure in prayer, I found I had to exert every ounce of will and action to cut off these faulty emotional dependencies upon people, upon AA, indeed upon any act of circumstance whatsoever.

Then only could I be free to love as Francis did. Emotional and instinctual satisfactions, I saw, were really the extra dividends of having love, offering love, and expressing love appropriate to each relation of life. Plainly, I could not avail myself to God's love until I was able to offer it back to Him by loving others as He would have me. And I couldn't possibly do that so long as I was victimized by false dependencies. For my dependence meant demand, a demand for the possession and control of the people and the conditions surrounding me.

While those words "absolute dependence" may look like a gimmick, they were the ones that helped to trigger my release into my present degree of stability and quietness of mind, qualities which I am now trying to consolidate by offering love to others regardless of the return to me.

This seems to be the primary healing circuit: an outgoing love of God's creation and His people, by means of which we avail ourselves of His love for us. It is most clear that the real current can't flow until our paralyzing dependencies are broken and broken at depth. Only then can we possibly have a glimmer of what adult love really is. If we examine every disturbance we have, great or small, we will find at the root of it some unhealthy dependence and its consequent demand. Let us, with God's help, continually surrender these hobbling demands. Then we can be set free to live and love: we may then be able to gain *emotional sobriety*.

Of course, I haven't offered you a really new idea --- only a gimmick that has started to unhook several of my own hexes at depth. Nowadays, my brain no longer races compulsively in either elation, grandiosity, or depression. I have been given a quiet place in bright sunshine."

Bill Wilson

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Recovery is not one and done.

It is a lifelong journey that takes place one step at a time, one day at a time.

From Members:

My first AA group met in a clubroom upstairs in an old building. The paint was peeling, the windows were dirty; the chairs and tables were Early Depression. There was an old broken-down desk in the corner, its drawers filled with AA literature, scraps of paper, dirty and used paper cups, and every other imaginable relic of the past. The walls displayed the usual Steps and Traditions, Serenity Prayer and Slogans. On the top of the desk was the usual supply of Big Books, Twelve and Twelves, and pamphlets in various stages of disarray. I stayed around that club attending the meetings and reading everything I could find, and it was there that I had my first demonstration of how AA works.

Some two months after my first AA meeting, on a December afternoon during a heavy snowfall, a call for help came in. I answered the phone. It was a fellow I had met at the meetings there, and it was obvious he had been drinking. He told me he was at a city jail in a town some sixty miles away, and asked me to get The AA directory in the clubroom, call a member in the town where he now was, and ask that person to come help him.

The only other person in the room at that time was the caretaker, and neither of us knew what an AA directory was; but we began to search. I went to the old desk, started to empty the drawers, and found an outdated (one-volume) AA directory, published by AA World Services more than seven years before. It was all we could find. I turned to our state and the name of the town from which the call had come. There was one group listed, with one contact's name and phone number.

I called the number, and when a man answered, I asked for the person listed in the old directory. This man informed me that he was that person. Immediately, I identified myself as an AA member and told him of the plight of the man at the jail. There was a very long pause, and he finally asked, "Where did you get my name?" When I told him, he said, "I did belong to the AA group in town, but I haven't attended an AA meeting in more than five years, even though I'm still sober."

We talked a bit longer; I told him about the AA member in trouble; he told me that it was snowing hard and he lived thirteen miles away from town. It ended with his saying he would put chains on his pickup truck, go into town, and call me after he had talked to the fellow in trouble. Some two hours later, he called back, saying he had secured the release of the alcoholic and brought him home. The man in trouble soon returned to our group, and he is now sober.

About three years later, I went to that town to talk at an AA meeting. After the meeting, a man came up to me and asked if I remembered making that call three years before. Of course I remembered it, because it was my first one. He said, "That got me back into AA, and I've never left again." I see him at AA meetings of all kinds and have for many years now.

So that old, out-of-date AA directory helped three alcoholics. and maybe many more. Who Knows?

Howard



My AA story started 1991 when I came in because I was afraid that someone was going to take my 3-month-old baby boy away from me. My disease had progressed to the point where I was putting him and myself in dangerous situations!

My upstairs neighbors had just begun going to AA and was trying to get me to go. I didn't go right away, I finally did attend my initial meeting. I did stay sober for quite some time, did some sponsor hopping, did some group level service, but eventually I fell away from the program. At this point I had 4 more children and I was not drinking, but I wasn't the mother I had hoped to be. I had become a dry drunk. I ended up using a different substance for "comfort." I was so fortunate that my higher power got me back to the rooms before it became bad! I understood the grace that I had received and decided to go all in. Something that eluded me before. I got a home group. I got a sponsor who went through the first 164 pages with me. I got in to service at the group level, and quite a bit of it. I was really on the beam!!

At this point my marriage was failing and we were divorced. My WHOLE life changed! Suddenly I found myself living here in South Jersey, after 53 years living in one area! I was excited and SO SCARED of going to AA and starting over! I started going to a particular meeting on a regular basis and started to slowly make some friends in the program. I went through a couple of sponsors and began to do some service for the group. It was great! I felt though that there was supposed to be more. So, I found my current sponsor. What a game changer! For whatever reason, (higher power!) I was willing to do all of the things that she asked! It was a first for me! This sponsor is very involved in AA on other levels and suddenly I found myself voluntold to take a position at intergroup! I was so scared (Once again) but she helped me, and the people there helped me! This has changed my life! I have always wanted to be part of, and I did find that at the group level, but this has broadened and enhanced my AA life and thereby my life as a whole.

It turns out that this is one of the best moves and decisions I have ever made! It's fun and rewarding! And there are many more positions in AA that eventually I can volunteer to do and continue to grow and seek! Love and service.

Karen N

Heard at a meeting:
The hardest step is the door step.

**We feel that elimination of our drinking is but a beginning.
Can you find this in the Big Book?**

No One Can Be Turned Away

The only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking (Tradition Three). After many years of sobriety and practicing the AA principles to the best of my ability, I am amazed at what I see in the meetings that I attend. It was one of the most important developments in my later years of sobriety. Removing my judgmental attitude of other people in AA, that have a desire to stop drinking, I have come to understand that tradition. But, it did not happen immediately. I was overwhelmed with personal problems that eventually culminated into my surrender and came to AA searching for answers. I am so grateful that they did not turn me away because I had problems.

The AA Program is so much deeper than I ever could have imagined when I first entered it. Over time, I now recognize the depth of each issue that we face when we come clean with ourselves and with the world around us. It is sometimes likened to the layers of an onion. The surface skin begins to fall away quickly as we address the drinking part of our disease. Each layer is preparatory to the next. As we recognize and begin to discard the negative side of our thoughts and behaviors, we begin to understand that our thinking is where the problems lie. And, our behaviors are the symptoms of that faulty thinking when our natural instincts far exceed their intended purpose.

In my early days of sobriety, my mentors suggested that if I plan to attend several meetings per week, one of them should be a step meeting, and I have followed that suggestion ever since. One of the benefits of that decision is that we study each step four times a year and each time I repeat a previous step, I notice an improvement in my understanding of that step.

In the presence of that group, I may hear 20 to 30 different perspectives on how to address my faulty thinking and all those viewpoints are stored in my mind as I peel away one more layer of the onion. I learned the value of living by unselfish principles and that simple understanding takes most of my decision making out of my hands. Principles are not flexible, and I do not create my own principles. I do, however, have the ability to follow well-established ethics. And, even then, sometimes things may go wrong. But, my motives are of an unselfish nature, and I do my best. I learn to be prudent when it comes to my decisions. I learn to decide if it was my ego or my conscience making that choice. And, today my conscience renders my ego irrelevant for the most part.

I have always known right from wrong, but with my fears and insecurities, I usually made the wrong/selfish decision and my conscience suffered. If I already know when I am doing the wrong thing, why am I praying to God when I already know the answer and still make the wrong choice? It is true that the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. But, in AA, I found so much more. Within the safety of my AA group, I get to test these qualities out and establish a new perspective, unselfish in nature, as I peel away layer after layer, and my load gets lighter and lighter. I no longer look at this process to be ponderous. I now see it as exciting and I want to continue to look deeper into my spiritual condition, living by the dictates of my conscience. And, I hope this process never ends as I trudge that road of happy destiny.

By Rick R.



It's Up To You!

Did you make someone happy, or make someone sad?

What did you do with the day that you had?

God gave it to you, to do just as you would.

Did you do something wicked, or do something good?

Did you make someone smile, or just give a frown?

Did you lift someone up, or push someone down?

Did you lighten some load, or progress impede?

Did you look for a rose, or just gather a weed?

What did you do with your glorious day?

God gave it to you, did you throw it away?

The drunken monkey hypothesis proposes that human attraction to ethanol may have a genetic basis due to the high dependence of the primate ancestor of Homo sapiens on fruit as a food source. Ethanol naturally occurs in ripe and overripe fruit and consequently early primates developed a genetically based attraction to the substance. This hypothesis was originally proposed by Dr. Robert Dudley of the University of California at Berkeley and was the subject of a symposium at the meeting of the Society for Integrative and Comparative Biology. Dudley believes that while most addictive substances have a relatively short history of use, ethanol attraction may have a long evolutionarily based history. He believes that fruit ethanol may have been a significant source of energy and that the smell of the ripening fruit would help primates locate it. Ethanol is a relatively light molecule and diffuses rapidly in a natural environment. Primates are known to have a higher olfactory sensitivity to alcohol than other mammals. The once-beneficial attraction to ethanol may underlie human tendencies for alcohol use and alcohol abuse.

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The 12 Concepts of Service

The Twelve Concepts for World Service were written by A.A.'s co-founder Bill W., and were adopted by the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in 1962. The Concepts are an interpretation of A.A.'s world service structure as it emerged through A.A.'s early history and experience.

The short form of the Concepts reads:

1. Final responsibility and ultimate authority for A.A. world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship.
2. The General Service Conference of A.A. has become, for nearly every practical purpose, the active voice and the effective conscience of our whole society in its world affairs.
3. To insure effective leadership, we should endow each element of A.A.—the Conference, the General Service Board and its service corporations, staffs, committees, and executives—with a traditional “Right of Decision.”
4. At all responsible levels, we ought to maintain a traditional “Right of Participation,” allowing a voting representation in reasonable proportion to the responsibility that each must discharge.
5. Throughout our structure, a traditional “Right of Appeal” ought to prevail, so that minority opinion will be heard and personal grievances receive careful consideration.
6. The Conference recognizes that the chief initiative and active responsibility in most world service matters should be exercised by the trustee members of the Conference acting as the General Service Board.
7. The Charter and Bylaws of the General Service Board are legal instruments, empowering the trustees to manage and conduct world service affairs. The Conference Charter is not a legal document; it relies upon tradition and the A.A. purse for final effectiveness.
8. The trustees are the principal planners and administrators of over-all policy and finance. They have custodial oversight of the separately incorporated and constantly active services, exercising this through their ability to elect all the directors of these entities.
9. Good service leadership at all levels is indispensable for our future functioning and safety. Primary world service leadership, once exercised by the founders, must necessarily be assumed by the trustees.
10. Every service responsibility should be matched by an equal service authority, with the scope of such authority well defined.
11. The trustees should always have the best possible committees, corporate service directors, executives, staffs, and consultants. Composition, qualifications, induction procedures, and rights and duties will always be matters of serious concern.
12. The Conference shall observe the spirit of A.A. tradition, taking care that it never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds and reserve be its prudent financial principle; that it place none of its members in a position of unqualified authority over others; that it reach all important decisions by discussion, vote, and whenever possible, substantial unanimity; that its actions never be personally punitive nor an incitement to public controversy; that it never perform acts of government; that, like the Society it serves, it will always remain democratic in thought and action.

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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 on to the alcoholic who still suffers.

CONTRIBUTIONS EQUAL SERVICE
MONEY IN THE BASKET IS TWELFTH
STEP WORK



love + SERVICE

Steering Panel Committee

THE INTERGROUP PANEL AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS MEET 2ND WEDNESDAY OF EVERY MONTH .
ATTENDANCE AT THIS MEETING IS ALSO AVAILABLE VIRTUAL ID 542 744 809

Business Meeting

3RD WEDNESDAY OF EVERY MONTH, AT 7:30PM.
ATTENDANCE AT THIS MEETING IS ALSO AVAILABLE VIRTUAL ID 164 233 922

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