

# Pass it on



Summer Edition 2021

## Overcoming Challenging Changes in Sobriety



By: Anonymous AA Member

Whether it's overcoming the challenges of change from life because of the pandemic, or a house full of roudy school kids because Summer vacation has arrived, we all face change and the different set of challenges it brings us. In the Summer edition of the Pass It On, we hear about the tools our fellow AA members apply to overcome the difficulties of change in their lives of recovery.

Change can be particularly difficult in early recovery, but coping and dealing with change will impact us throughout our lives in recovery. Even *positive* changes can be hard for sober alcoholics! Some active in recovery recommend reciting the Serenity Prayer throughout difficult and challenging times of change. Others may recommend reaching out to another sober alcoholic or to a sponsor or sponsee to talk about the challenging changes they are facing. Talking about it at an AA meeting may also be a great way to cope with challenging changes in your AA journey. Some may also recommend trying to be adaptable and flexible in times of challenging change during sobriety and major life events.

It is also recommended practicing 10, 11 and 12 help us be better equipped to face and deal with challenging change and the challenges of life. "If you are doing step 10... and constantly dealing with life as it comes, you are better able to handle it," the AA member said. It's important for us as recovering alcoholics to practice step 10 **throughout the day** so that we can better accept and handle challenging change as our lives and days unfold. Utilizing the 11th step as checks and balance at the end of our day, we can review how our day went and ask, if necessary, for corrective measures, then close out my nightly review with a prayer of thanks. When we wake up, we take a moment to look at our day ahead, and ask for God's guidance, courage and strength. Then, I can enter my day with assurance and be confident I can handle change. Step twelve can be a coping skill for dealing with change, as well. We try to get out of self as much as possible," and to utilize all the principles of the program. These maintenance steps help us go out and face the world of reality, with changes and all.

# Announcements and More

## Meeting Change Details



Serenity Now 'Zoom' is now The Fourth Dimension (per page 25 of the Big Book).

A Zoom-only meeting, we were able to keep our same Meeting ID of 259 404 1173,

and our same weekday meeting time of 12 Noon, Monday thru Friday. There is also a 5:30 PM meeting every Sunday afternoon, same Meeting ID.

## Primary Purpose Zoom Meeting

The AA Primary Purpose Meeting will continue to hold zoom meetings. The open Big Book study will be on Monday evenings from 5:30 pm to 6:30 pm.

The meeting ID is: 844 5542 3754

Passcode: 108293

### May Financial Reports

Accounts Receivables: \$1,644.34

Outstanding Payables: \$3,993.75

Gross Profit: \$2,106.,85

Total Expenses: \$6,730.78

Net Income: (\$1,623.93)

Income - Books & Literature:  
\$1,114.64

May Donations: \$1,632.26



**Do you have an announcement  
or story you would like to share  
with us? Please let us know!**

***EditorPassItOn@gmail.com***

# Life Without Alcohol

**By: Dan V.**

We talk a lot in our meetings about Alcoholics Anonymous being “a design for living” and not just a way to stop drinking, as the Big Book itself in says in the first three chapters. In fact, to quote Chapter 2, “elimination of our drinking is but a beginning.” And person after person has shared how the principles of The Program have helped them with specific events in their lives. And that’s great – because I have too!

But I never really actually explored the story behind putting those principles into everyday life. So for those of you who, like me, haven’t necessarily read – or absorbed – all of the personal stories in the back half of the Big Book, Number 15 is one you might want to sit down with sometime soon. Entitled “AA Taught Him To Handle Sobriety”, it opens with an oldtimer saying “AA does not teach us to handle our drinking...” Why? Well, because we’ve stopped the drinking! Rather, “It teaches us how to handle sobriety.”

The writer goes on to say that when he became a full-blown alcoholic, people started telling him he should quit. And, like myself, he would quit... for a while... several times. As he says, “It’s no great trick to stop drinking; the trick is to stay stopped.” And to do that, he came to AA, because “it was sobriety I could not handle in the first place – that’s why I drank!” And that is exactly it: I drank because I could not handle life with alcohol; couldn’t even really imagine it. And I certainly didn’t imagine that, coming out of treatment and into the rooms of AA, I was doing so to learn how to handle my new-found (albeit “forced”) sobriety: I was just going because that was how I was supposed to keep myself from drinking again. Granted it’s a fine line there, but it is such a huge difference in perspective. Let me explain...

The writer goes on to describe the details of his drinking experience, which you can read for yourself; but the end came right out of my own experience. “The doctor pronounced it a badly enlarged liver and said I had to quit drinking. I did. I went on the wagon, with no outside help and with no real difficulty – except that I didn’t enjoy life without drinking. I had to cope with the demands of everyday living without my comforter, my anesthetic, my crutch. And I didn’t like it.”

“So when my liver had recovered after ten months, I resumed drinking. At first, just one drink, on occasion. Then drinks came more frequently but were carefully spaced out. Soon my drinking was as bad as ever...” Yep. And when I retired, it turned into all day every day. So bad was it that my wife ended up telling her employer she had to quit to be home to take care of me because of issues following my heart attack. Well, that was 3 years earlier; and the truth of the matter was she was quitting because of my drinking. I was never a bar person, but I had taken to carrying a bottle of vodka in my truck, on the lawnmower, in my tackle box... everywhere I was going to be. Because, well, whatever it was, it would just be too boring or too much like work or simply not as much fun without it! And vodka, of course, not because of the taste, by any stretch, but because it was cheap and (supposedly) had the least odor of the affordable options. This was also proof of what it says in Chapter 3: changing what you are drinking does not lead you to better control over your drinking. I went from enjoying beer (too many cans was too much evidence) to non-alcoholic beer (to cover the vodka smell), from gin martinis to wine (so I could replace bottles behind her back), eventually to vodka, all so I could drink more, not less!

In the end, the story says, “As the sober days grew into sober months and then into sober years, a new and beautiful life began to emerge from the shambles of my former existence.” As I write this, I am just three days from being one year sober; and I’m here to testify the time has just FLOWN by! I can hardly believe it myself – not when I was so sure that life was going to be a dull, boring drag when I exited rehab. ALL of those things I thought I just wasn’t going to be able to enjoy, or even “survive,” without booze – yard work, watching football, grilling, watching movies, playing games, going on trips, going out to eat, just driving anywhere alone (yikes!), and even hanging with out with my wife, daughter and her husband who drink... AA taught me how to handle my sobriety, and it has been far easier than I ever imagined.

“I have learned how to relate to people...to deal with disappointments and problems that once would have sent me right to the bottle.” God willing, as the writer said, I hopefully will never have to deal with drinking again. But I will have to deal with being sober every day. And the writer says we do that “...by learning – through practicing the Twelve Steps and through sharing at meetings – how to cope with the problems that we looked to booze to solve, back in our drinking days.” It has been essentially one year now since I took my last drink; and while that makes me neither an old timer nor an expert, by any stretch, even in that short time I’ve felt my sobriety evolve beyond merely just “coping” with things.

The writer rightly points out Steps Four and Five as the turning point, where I identified my resentments and saw my self-centeredness and self-pity; where I saw and confessed all of my known wrongs, and examined myself for the underlying defects in me that had caused them. But it was Steps Seven (sincerely asking God to remove those shortcomings) and Nine (the amends process) that moved me past “coping with” and more toward the prevention of those kinds of problems. I will also point out that my sponsor was huge in this evolution, and just attending meetings helps keep my mind in the right place – without saying a word, I can simply listen and still continue to learn how I can practice the Steps “in all of my affairs”.

And for me, that starts with Step Eleven: “improving my conscious contact with God”, not just on a daily basis, but throughout each day as much as I can. That leads me back to the on-going personal inventory and admission of wrong-doings that is the daily practice of Step Ten; and finally lands me in the Twelfth Step work of giving strength, hope, encouragement, comfort, and maybe even a little guidance to other alcoholics through the lessons of my own experience. In just one short year, I have found the steady keel of contentment underlying the highs and lows of momentary happiness: the writer says, “We learn how to level out the emotional swings that got us into trouble both when we were up and when we were down”.

It goes on to point out how I can differentiate between my “wants (which are never satisfied)” and my “needs (which are always provided for)”. So I ask God, “Give us this day our daily bread...” It’s not just about food! It’s about everything we need, physically and mentally, emotionally and spiritually, just for today. As the writer says, “We cast off the burdens of the past and the anxieties of the future, as we begin to live in the present, one day at a time. We are granted ‘the serenity to accept the things we cannot change’— and thus lose our quickness to anger and our sensitivity to criticism.” Because the Steps taught us to practice patience and tolerance in place of resentment, pride and self-pity.

“Above all”, it says, “we reject fantasizing and accept reality. The more I drank, the more I fantasized [or romanticized] everything... AA led me gently from this fantasizing to embrace reality with open arms. And I found it beautiful! For at last, I was at peace with myself. And with others. And with God.” That’s contentment, and serenity; even in the midst of a storm, because storms are also only temporary. So I can make it through whatever storm, whatever problem, may come my way in life just fine with what AA has taught me, with my Higher Power as my guiding Light. *And most definitely without alcohol.*