

# SPIRITUAL *Awakening*

The Daily Reprieve  
December 2020 Edition



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Letter from the Editor

Welcome to the latest edition of the Daily Reprieve,

This has been quite an intense year for every one of us, and a lot of folks had to grab onto something bigger than themselves, just to get a sense of safety and security. The final edition of this year will be themed a 'Spiritual Awakening' as that is one of the key elements to the 12th step and we believe it's so apt for ending a difficult year on an inspiring note.

As alcoholics in recovery, we get to share our experience, strength and hope in so many ways - and to many - that is exactly what a spiritual awakening is; finding a similarity in someone else's experience, when we thought that it only ever happened to us. This happens through going to meetings, doing the 12 steps and sharing our inventories with a sponsor, making amends and doing service.

We have an array of wonderful articles, poems and experiences which highlight the experiences of many alcoholics - that allowed them to have an experience that took away the obsession to drink and we hope that it inspires you, as much as it has inspired us.

We wish you happy, sober holidays and a wonderful start to the new year,

Until next time,

The AA Newsletter Committee

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# *Symptoms of a Spiritual Awakening*

I was told that AA is a spiritual program, not a religious program. However in early sobriety, I still struggled with the idea of God and really wondered if this program will work for me.

Through the help of my sponsor in step 2 and 3, I eventually identified God as Love, which encompasses qualities of kindness, compassion and forgiveness.

However, the concept of having a spiritual awakening really only started to sink in when I went to a meeting in Bangkok where they shared the 12 signs of a spiritual awakening without God. I then realized that this has come true for me.

~ Gideon

## *12 Symptoms of a Spiritual Awakening*

1. An increased tendency to let things happen rather than make them happen.
2. Frequent attacks of smiling.
3. Feelings of being connected with others and nature.
4. Frequent overwhelming episodes of appreciation.
5. A tendency to think and act spontaneously rather than from fears based on past experience.
6. An unmistakable ability to enjoy each moment.
7. A loss of ability to worry.
8. A loss of interest in conflict.
9. A loss of interest in interpreting the actions of others.
10. A loss of interest in judging others.
11. A loss of interest in judging self.
12. Gaining the ability to love without expecting anything.

## *My Spiritual Awakening*

Being me, I had my 1st Spiritual awakening in Rehab in all places. I was sent by my Job to Rhinebeck Rehab, Rhinebeck, NY for 30 days. My roommate, Geisle, an Icelander, decided our physical exercise was to jog from our Billets down to the main road, a 1/4 mile down hill then jog back up the hill to the Mess Hall for morning breakfast. I was in Rehab and knew nothing of AA slogans, steps or concept. Nothing. I was truly 'MOCUS' as the NY Old Timers would call it. I didn't know whether to wound my ass or scratched my ass. That's Mocus Folks.

One morning jogging down the hill suddenly I noticed things around me were all growing larger. The colors of the shrubbery, the trees, the Sky colors were so vivid and immensely bright. I was aware. I was not scared. There was such peace of mind. At this time of my Sobriety (?) MY MIND constantly ran saying crazy things morning, noon and night. I remember saying, if I get hit by one of those cars down there on that main road and die, I would have had a wonderful day. Mind you, this is 630 am before our 730 am Breakfast meal. I didn't understand all this calmness I felt at the time this was happening but I knew this was a good thing. I would get better in spite of my fears, confusion and anger.

Being suicidal several times before arriving at Rehab, the desire to die left me. For whatever reason, I wanted to live for the first time. This folks, to me, was my Spiritual Awakening. I never discussed this magical moment with anyone or questioned it, I just knew this was good for me and I totally accepted that moment without questioning.

My 2nd Spiritual Awakening was going to a meeting in NYC 70's on the East Side.. I just got out of Rhinebeck, NY rehab starting my AA Program. 'GETTING sober, y'all ' I had it going on. The speaker was from a state that grew corn. Kansas, Iowa, Missouri. I don't remember the state or her first name. But I will never forget how she started her share. She could changed her name, changed the style of clothes to wear even her sex today. But she could never change being an alcoholic and to know that, she was 'grateful'. From that evening meeting on the Eastside till now this is why I have announced myself at AA Meetings as a grateful Alcoholic.

My 3rd Spiritual Awakening was at Gracie Square Hospital, NYC, NY. My Straight Sponsor wanted me to branch out in AA and start attending GAY Meetings since I worked in The City. I lived 45 miles away in Freeport on Long Island. He told me to go to Gracie Square on Wednesday for 800 pm Gay Meeting. I don't remember this speaker's first name either. He was from New Jersey though. He started his share by saying "AA was for people who believed in God. AA is for people who do not believe in God and AA is for people who think they are GOD! I SAID to myself, I am in the right place. I've been attending Gay AA Fellowship ever since. I BELONG. If it has an 'A' on the end of it, I belong.

I have had several more Spiritual Awakenings in my 41 years of continuous sobriety. Each one was magical leaving me with such a calmness and peace of mind. Finally, I BELONG AND FELT APART OF SOMETHING GREATER THAT MYSELF. Being a grateful Alcoholic.

~ TonyT

# *How I Found My Higher Power*

I will never forget the first time I walked into the Rainbow Meeting in Chinatown, Singapore. I was hungover, still half drunk and full of self-loathing. I was at the end of my rope and did not know where else to go. A therapist I was seeing had suggested that I try AA and had recommended this particular meeting, saying that it had a reputation for being especially good for newcomers. And it was. Everyone was so warm and welcoming. A few women approached me after the meeting and offered their numbers. Others invited me to join them for brunch down the street. But honestly, I couldn't get out of there fast enough! "God" had been mentioned in the meeting so I knew that this program could not work for me, just as it had not worked for my atheist father before me.

Another year of drinking went by during which I plunged to new depths of insanity, shame and self-destruction. I crawled back up into that loft in Chinatown with an even greater sense of desperation than I had the year before. This time I was convinced that there was no other hope for me. I had to give AA a real try. I cried and cried and cried my way through my first 3 months in the program. I approached countless fellows to argue my stance against "belief", to explain that I couldn't just all of the sudden have faith in some "God". I fought and scratched and pushed against this concept incessantly, but in my desperation I did as

was recommended to me: keep coming back, fake it til you make it, just don't take a drink, reach out. I began to ask everyone I met in the meetings what their concept of a Higher Power was. I was stunned to find that almost every person I spoke with had a different "God". One woman had her deceased, beloved Grandmother as her Higher Power, another had the beautiful, magical nature of her home country, another the universe, and another had their own "higher self". One fellow asked me very simply if there was ever a time when I felt there was some type of positive force or energy that was greater than myself? That was easy. When I was at the beach and when danced. In both cases I felt that there was some kind of amazing power at play that was totally beyond my control or description. That energy elevated me and made me feel part of something much greater than myself. So there I had it!!! I found my Higher Power! And all at once I was able to make sense of the Big Book, the Steps, the shares. Everything began to fall into place for my path to recovery.

Over the past 4 years my concept of a Higher Power has continued to shift, evolve and develop. What has remained constant is the miraculous knowledge that I never again need to feel alone in this life. I came into AA because I desperately wanted to quit drinking and didn't know how. What I found here was so much more! I found my tribe. I found a growing sense of self worth and usefulness. And I found my Higher Power.

~ Marnie

# *The Ever Unfolding Spiritual Awakening*

Through the Twelve-Step Program of Alcoholics Anonymous I have the opportunity to be a radically different kind of person. If I were to continue on with self-will, my life would surely become another alcoholic tragedy. My experience has been that when I make an effort, my Higher Power presents itself. No one is going to do it for me. No one can awaken me. The steps and the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous point out the way. I have to do the work and take those steps. This is where the spiritual principle of responsibility comes in. I am responsible for my own spiritual journey, my own development and growth. I was finally able to see I was the problem and accept the futility and fatality of continuing to live in self-will, selfishness and self-centeredness. It became utterly apparent that continuing to live that way would kill me.

At what point did I come to that and what did it take to get there? Where did it begin? This is the magic of it. I can't fully explain when, where, why and how, but I seemed to have all the right ingredients necessary to produce a spiritual awakening: honesty, the desperation of the drowning, surrender, willingness, effort, and promptness. God was with me. Maybe there wouldn't have been another spiritual window of opportunity available again for a long time that could have produced the entire psychic change. It could be rarer than a blue moon. God works in mysterious ways and he's always anonymous (there's no stamp left behind that says "God was here").

In addition, I was finally willing to go to another program to address a part of my life that was keeping me sick. That was a surrender. Now I am able to bring my experience to women I work with in AA who struggle with the same

issues and are in need of identification and help.

My spiritual awakening has given life to the spiritual principles I need to adopt in order to stay alive. Today, I practice surrender and acceptance and it seems to be coming more naturally. As the book says, I am tempted at times, but I often do recoil as if from a hot flame. I know that old behavior will only bring me misery. It's a Broad Highway, however; this is a lifetime of practice.

I have a list of rules I must live by that I continue to add to:

- Hold no resentments (p. 66)
- If sex conduct continues to harm others (or myself) we are quite sure to drink. (p. 70)
- Hard on ourselves, considerate of others. (p. 74)
- Giving, rather than getting, will become the guiding principle. (p. 128)
- Regarding fear: trust and rely upon God. (p. 68)
- Do not drift into worry, remorse or morbid reflection. (p. 86)
- Never skip step 5 or else we may not overcome drinking. (p. 72)
- We must be entirely honest with somebody. (p. 74)

This is life and death. First and foremost I do the work to stay alive. For the real alcoholic there is no choice. Helpfully, the spiritual work has become a joy and I am so very grateful for this program, the fellowship, my recovery and the friends I have made along the way who I love. Godspeed and good luck on your awakening.

~Margaret





## *A Vital Change in Perspective*

A favourite thing about AA for me is that in one meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous, one can hear dozens of different ideas of God, Higher Power and Spiritual Awakening or Experience, despite us all following one method of getting there: The Twelve Steps.

For me, I see that I am in a spiritual experience living my sober life and that I have been awakened to a new perspective in and of life. I need this to stay alive, for I was a depressed alcoholic pumping a depressant in the form of alcohol into my body while trying to be treated for depression. (I believe this is where my American friends would say: "go figure" sarcastically!)

Appendix Two of the Big Book uses the word *change*, or a simile of it, nine times on page 567. This *alteration* is that I get to see the world in a different light to the one I saw before thanks to having completed The Twelve Steps and taking a few daily actions such as prayer and gratitude lists. Sat in England at present, it is all too easy to look out of my window and moan about the grey sky, wet weather and that I miss Singapore, and believe me, I do still moan! But I also can say I am fortunate and grateful to have a roof over my head, to be living with family that love me and that I miss Singapore because of the amazing time I had there and amazing friends I made that I can video call and communicate with very easily thanks to the technology I have enough money to have.

How does this relate to my alcoholism? Because I could and used to drink over these things and things far smaller for that matter.

As a depressed alcoholic, I used to sit in pain and misery and think I was making it better when in fact I was making it worse. At the age of 21, I didn't want to participate in life at all and a major suicide attempt lead me to what I believe was my first taste of a spiritual experience that I can now see is divine intervention, for I should have died that night by my plans.

Even in sobriety, I can get off the beam and into some negative head spaces when I am not putting my programme first.

Now, I can share my discomforts with my sponsor or other fellows, do the work AA has taught me to do and then, sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly, I feel better for taking the appropriate actions. I think it is a blessing that even with the worst things that have happened to me in sobriety such as family bereavements, recurrent illnesses or leaving my partner behind in Singapore, I can almost always put a positive spin on it that helps me see the light, usually that I can be of service to AA or my family differently to how I was before.

What I have, thanks to putting right my past and putting my programme first one day at a time, contributes hugely to my daily sobriety and is a blessing of being an alcoholic. A vital change in perspective where I no longer live with regrets, can see the positive sides in situations and get to live in a state of love and tolerance of others. And myself.

~ Josh



## *Cosmic Landlord, fix my plumbing!*

Cosmic maker of this earth;  
absent landlord taking rent;  
Pipes are leaking; weeds are growing;  
Make yourself known! I am spent

Absent landlord, lend a hand.  
Stop and fix this broken land  
You confess for I am weary;  
I am blameless — take a stand.

I shake my fist! I curse out loud;  
You're hiding, smirking. Aren't you? Damn!  
Why the silence? Why the coldness?  
Do you need a helping hand?

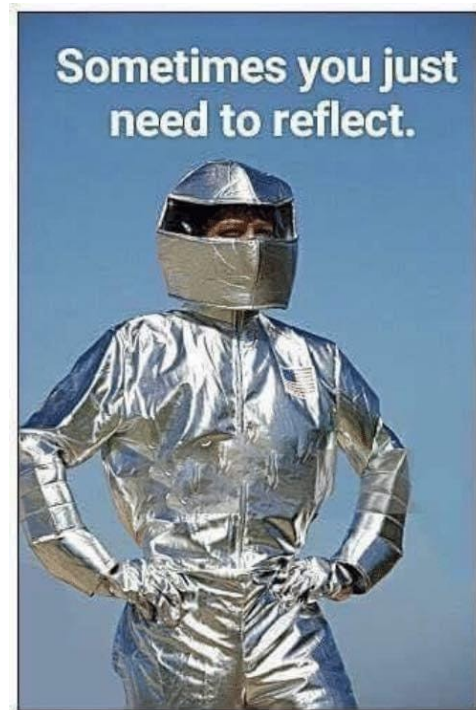
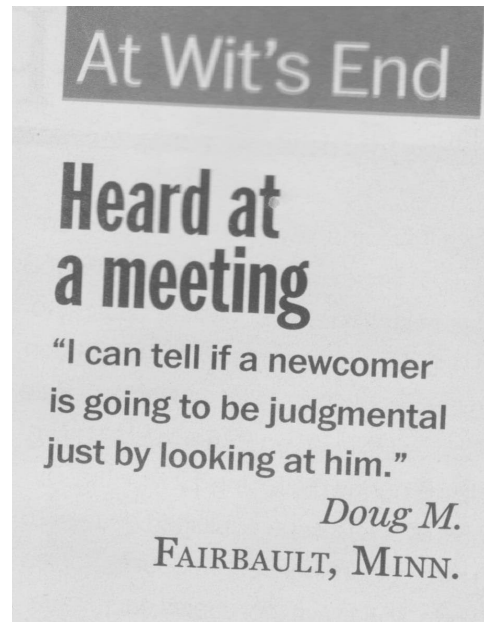
So, I wonder. Are you weary?  
Are you sick of tearful cries?  
Do you need some cheerful laughter?  
should we stop our harmful lies?

Should we help you fix our shanties,  
flimsy houses built on sand.  
Are you tearful, sad and lonely?  
Is it you who needs a hand?

Help us help you move the fulcrum;  
show us how to tilt the bar  
Back us in this quest for justice;  
we will aid you near and far

You can't do this on your own will;  
should we stop and take a stand  
Endless virus; endless sickness;  
It is you who needs a hand?

~Paul



# Spiritual Awakening

*The term “spiritual experience” and “spiritual awakening” are used many times in this book which, upon careful reading, shows that the personality change sufficient to bring about recovery from alcoholism has manifested itself among us in many different forms.*

Alcoholics Anonymous, Appendix II – Spiritual Experience.

I have heard that the greatest promise in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous can be found in Step 12, *“Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps”*.

Although I have heard this sentence read out in many meetings from my time in A.A., it took me some years to fully listen to this, the message of Alcoholics Anonymous. I know I am a slow learner. I have also found that my understanding of the spiritual awakenings and experiences I have had has invariably come in hindsight.

Before I came to A.A., I was not seeking a spiritual awakening, or so I thought. I was using alcohol to help me cope with the monotony and tedium of life. I was completely delusional about everything. And yet today I can see that the night of my last drunk, I did have a spiritual experience of some sort. I am not religious, but, on that fateful night in my drunken haze, before passing out, I had reached a point of desperation and I reached out to something – God, the Universe. I just simply said, “help me”. Within twenty-four hours I was in a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous, having been gently twelfth stepped by a kind of family member. I could not see this as a spiritual experience at the time, nor for at least three or four years.

In hindsight, I can also see that I had a spiritual awakening whilst writing my fourth

step. I remember my sponsor preparing me for Step 4 and wanting me to pay particular attention to *“Where had we been selfish, dishonest, self-seeking and frightened”* in my inventory. When I came to this part, I started to see how my behavior and actions had led to circumstances and situations where I had taken resentment. For me, this was a clear example in my recovery of a spiritual awakening as the veils started to lift and I could slowly start to see and understand about how I conducted myself. This did not turn me into a saint, I just started to begin to understand where I was coming from.

After I had completed my fifth step with my sponsor, I remember driving back to my serviced apartment and feeling very much like how it is described in the Big Book in *“Into Action”*. I had had a definite spiritual experience as the result of taking Step 5. This is the first spiritual experience or awakening that I had noticed in my recovery, all others prior to this took some time for me to see them for what they were.

I have heard and read accounts by members of A.A. where they had described their white light, burning bush spiritual experiences. Mine felt more like the education variety described in Appendix II. But I am not jealous. I am aware that I have had a vital spiritual experience powerful

enough to remove the obsession to drink from me. This is a real and tangible demonstration of a spiritual awakening for me and I am grateful it has happened. I am also aware that it is only contingent on my spiritual condition and that I have a daily reprieve.

Today, I can see that I have had a spiritual awakening as the result of the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous and that I can continue to have more spiritual awakenings

and experiences if I remain willing to continue on this spiritual path, keep working the 12 Steps and practice these principles in all of my affairs.

An old-timer once said in a meeting, *"I got my spiritual experiences through 'ass-mosis', by sitting my ass down in enough meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous and in working these steps"*. I can relate to this today.

Simon A.



## *Happiness versus Joy*

The Big Book tells us that God wants us to be happy, Joyous, and free (p. 133). At first reading I thought this statement was a bit redundant for, after all, were not happiness and joy synonymous emotions? I was later to take a different view.

Some years ago, I attended an AA gathering in a large campground near Sault Ste. Marie, Canada. While preparing to sleep in my tent I was taken over by a tremendous sadness. It came in vivid memory of the happy night where my lovely then-bride and I spent in the same tent above the Grand Canyon following our Las Vegas marriage. At once, a heavy depression crashed down with tremendous despondency. The happy times that we shared during our California years were gone—now we were divorced—she is gone from me forever. It was far past midnight and the black doom pressed down without pity. . . and it went on and on.

But then, all at once, my surroundings seemed to brighten! It was as though a beautiful light was shining in some mysterious manner. Although I was overcome with sadness, certainly not happiness, I was at once filled with JOY! ***I was experiencing both sadness and JOY at the same time!*** This bright JOY sparkled deep into the morning.

That experience convinced me that happiness and Joy are not at all the same. Happiness is a biological



phenomenon that comes and goes with life happenings. If the boss says, “you’re fired,” I will become sad, but if he gives me a raise, I am happy. But not so with spiritual JOY because true Joy comes from God and is not under the domain of this world. God has told us: *“I am not of this world!”*

True Joy has come to me spasmodically since that episode, but it comes and goes before I seem to be able to capture it, yet it is proof to me that God is with me. The Big Book speaks of the “Great Reality” deep within (p. 55). So, I believe if I live the life that AA has offered, I will continue to be mostly happy, but also experience surges of great JOY from time to time.

The Big Book promise of being ***happy*** and ***joyous*** is not redundant; this duo has helped me from taking that first drink for many years. Thank you, God!

Bob S





"I won't think about it anymore"

Me all night:





## *That's how the light gets in*

I had my first spiritual awakening when I took my very first drink...and I remember how I fucking loved it! Because now, I knew what it felt like to be normal, confident, funny and good enough - and the more I drank - the more I felt celebrated, smarter, sexier and richer! Until the next day (or a few days after that) where I would feel like shit again and then I would repeat the crazy cycle. Drink, feel good, then feel like shit and drink again. I always wanted to just feel good enough, but no amount of alcohol could give me what I so desperately wanted.

Like most of us, active alcoholism took me to some really dark places and even though I tried to control my drinking, my life just seemed to get darker and darker with every drink that I took. Until I hit a hard rock bottom that almost cost me my life and cracked me at the core of my being...which, thank God, allowed the light to shine through.

I joined the AA fellowship in early 2015 and I have just under 6 years of sobriety today - and I continue to experience various forms of awakenings daily. But there is one in particular that stands out for me:

I was about 9 months sober at the time and I remember I saw myself in the mirror when I was on my work (I was unemployable for many years, so this was quite a big deal for me) and I could look into my own eyes properly for the very first time and I forgive

myself in that moment. I slowly learnt to start loving myself for who I was, and I think that's where the obsession to drink left me.

I didn't stay in forgiveness for myself and there would be countless times where I would still beat myself up, but forgiveness, love and many other spiritual awakenings - come and go. I think that is the amazing gift of the program, is that it keeps on working for me, when I work for it.

I'm happy to not need to take a drink today, to take me out of my despair and I am thankful to each and every other alcoholic who gave me what alcohol always promised: peace, freedom, confidence and love.

I am still an alcoholic and my name is Adrian.

## *I don't want this to be about God*

God I don't want this to be about God  
God I'm embarrassed about the last time I believed in him

God I've tried that and it never worked  
Well it worked some, but 'cos I was lonely and sad

But I put that behind me but God  
That didn't turn out too well, maybe I should shut up and listen

God you think it unlikely there's one  
Well what other explanation do you have for all this being here?

Did a bubble of hot sea, and some fragments of rock  
Rub together and somehow birth life?  
Are you happy to accept as coincidence  
Your being here?  
In an infinite path of possibilities  
Did this just happen?  
Or is there too much here  
For there not to be a driving force, a cause?

God I'm open and bursting with love from the eyes  
God I'm climbing a hill to feel you in the sky  
In the transcendence of a beautiful view  
I feel like a child next to you

Like a child I unfold and awake  
In the stream in the air I can throw my mistakes  
And my chest falls and lifts ever new  
I feel excited, alive, thanks to you





## *Choice in Drink?*

Further reflection on Step One brought about a different understanding of its context. The first two parts of this step are separated by a dash—not a hyphen. A dash fulfills both segments of a sentence, e.g.:

*"We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable."*

At first, I considered the second part "unmanageable" to mean; drunk tanks, getting fired again, losing friends, etc.—and it sort of does. However, much more prevalent is the word "powerlessness" in the first part which had caused my life to become "unmanageable." My real powerlessness was when I started drinking, I could not stop, but when I stopped drinking, I could not stop starting. (Physical Allergy and Mental Obsession).

While years of "quitting drinking" failure by use of willpower, I never knew about the allergy-obsession syndrome: I never realized that I was powerless; that I had: "no choice in the matter of drink." (p. 24 of the BB)

As alcoholic despair deepened throughout the last Twenty-four years of drinking. My

efforts were not superficial: No more Lucky Strike cigarettes! High protein milkshakes! Running! Handball! Swimming! Weightlifting! Why I felt wonderful! Who needs booze? I was like the guy on page 57 of the Big Book (Fitz M): "He couldn't drink if he would." But alas, I came to believe that I had to drink whether I chose to or not—it would seem as though "quitting drinking" just got me drunk—and often in short order.

Could I have the dramatic relief as Fitz? Well, like Fitz, I asked God for help and have not had to drink alcohol since my very first AA meeting. Choosing to drink alcohol has been removed from my emotional vocabulary, e.g.: Choosing "to drink" or "not to drink" no longer occurs to me. I certainly hope that "choice in drink" never returns.

~Bob S



## *Spiritual awakening*

When I came to the rooms, I was 47. Was there any hope left? I didn't know but I knew I had nowhere to go with my problem but AA, as all my options were exhausted. I still must have had some type of higher power or something which was guiding me through to find the AA.

Being a few weeks into recovery I was trying to attend as many meetings as I could, sometimes interrupted by business travels, but still to do the deal. The goal was to make 90/90, which meant 90 meetings in 90 days. At one of those meetings someone shared that alcoholism is a threefold disease: spiritual, mental, and physical. Then later on added that the alcoholic firstly collapses spiritually then mentally and lastly physically. Recovery is a reversed process, everyone has own journey and spiritual recovery may take longer time. I don't think I understood anything that was said at that time.

After having read The Doctor's Opinion from Big Book I learnt about physical allergy and the phenomenon of craving. That alcoholic is afflicted with the allergy to alcohol and one drink triggers an unstoppable urge to drink more and more, something which has been explained to me that 'one drink is not enough and a thousand is too many'. When others can drink with impunity I knew that for me this was just a history. But understanding and knowing this is alcoholism is not enough. At that point of the time it was clear that the first drink

would always make me drunk, so how to make sure and increase my chances not to pick up the first drink? The program and my higher power, which still had to be accepted at that stage of my recovery, worked in mysterious ways and thanks to the gift of desperation I was doing what I was told to do, not immediately but progressively and consequently. I also remembered, from that chapter of the Big Book, that psychic change was required to save the person doomed to alcoholism. Such change is beyond human power and can only be given by power greater than ourselves.

AA jargon is full of phrases like; program of ego deflection, grow through the pain, spiritual program, submitting to higher power, give away what you received, surrender to win. Although some of those were paradoxes, all that suddenly started to make sense to me. Nonetheless I was told that AA program requires to be worked and not to be understood, that this is a simple program of action. Someone even said not only to work the program but to live in the program. I love that, especially when it came to practicing these principles in all affairs.

It was not easy but after a couple of months I chose a sponsor and started to work my 12 steps, attending meetings and taking some service positions. The 12th Step promise "Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps" I have conditionally given up on working the program and staying connected with AA. I

am not sure when the psychic change or spiritual awakening happened exactly, as both are synonymous to me, but my desire for alcohol vanished. Of course there are good and bad days and I am not cured but in recovery. The disease is still in me and working to surface, when the time is right. It is like having a 'time bomb' inside and trying to defuse it on a daily basis. That is what I have to focus on – 24 hours a day.

Being almost 9 years in recovery I learnt the hard way that this is a daily reprieve and it is contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition. My complacency and

self-reliance, not reliance on God, failed me and reminded me again that I am not cured.

After my relapse I returned immediately to the rooms. The decision to come back was relatively easy, which I am so thankful to my Higher Power, but now I have to work harder.

I am still thinking that my God was teaching me a lesson and reminding me who I am – the Alcoholic.

~ Jarek



## *Bill W's Christmas Present*

On a bleak November day of 1934, Bill W. was in the process of receiving—albeit unknowingly—a Christmas present beyond his belief. A visit from an old schoolmate, Ebby T. explained how he had found sobriety via religious ideas of the Oxford Group. Bill was amazed, yet unimpressed. He thought: “My gin will outlast his preaching.” (p. 9) But it did not! Bill’s curiosity of his friend’s success eventually led Bill to the doors of the alcoholic ward of Towns Hospital a few weeks later. He was released with a full week of sobriety on December 18, just one week before Christmas. He never drank again!

But that was only a beginning! While in the Hospital he had a personality change that altered his modus operandi. He previously had never wanted anything more than to be a rich member of the Wall street crowd, as he was before drinking ruined that high point of his life. However, before leaving the hospital the thought came to him: “There were thousands of hopeless alcoholics who might be glad to have what had been so freely given to me. Perhaps I could help some of them. They in turn might work with others.” (P. 14)

Bill’s real Christmas present was a complete personality change as described by Dr. Carl Jung: “Old ideas, emotions and attitudes are suddenly cast aside and replaced by a new set of conceptions and motives.” (p. 27) Well, did Bill go back to Wall street? No, he did not! He went down to Calvary mission and brought home a disheveled, perhaps

not so well smelling, wino to his fancy Brooklyn Heights home and fed him and prayed with him. But the drunk got drunk. So, he went back and the same happened. Did he give up and go back to Wall Street? No, he did not! He went back to that mission again and again through January, February and March of 1935 and guess what? They all got drunk!

What a personality change! What a wonderful Christmas present! Not just getting sober, but a strong desire to help others. We call this Step Twelve today, but this personality change was not only Bill’s exciting Christmas Present—it was certainly ours, as well!

Bob S

