

# WHAT *saved* YOU?



The Daily Reprieve  
Q1 Edition  
[www.singaporeaa.org](http://www.singaporeaa.org)

## Editor's Letter

Welcome to the latest edition of the Daily Reprieve.

*"Who cares to admit complete defeat, practically no one of course."*

*12 Steps and 12 Traditions pg 21.*

As alcoholics who keep sober one day at a time, we have to bring ourselves back to powerlessness on a regular basis - and one of the most effective ways to do that, is to think back to the last few days or weeks before we got sober and joined AA.

Many fellows here in Singapore shared what *complete dedeat* looked like for them, which we then contrasted with articles of what saved them too.

We trust that you will enjoy this edition and share it with those who you think might get inspired by these stories.

*Give freely of what you find and join us. We shall be with you in the Fellowship of the Spirit, and you will surely meet some of us as you trudge the Road of Happy Destiny.*

*May God bless you and keep you - until then.*

The AA Newsletter Team

# Part 1

## What does complete defeat look like to you?

### Dead Eyes

I used to fear having my photo taken, especially when it was a happy occasion. I'd have this sense of foreboding about what I'd look like in the photo. It was the eyes - they never lied. Sad, soulless eyes. They told me I was broken - that I was lying to myself and the people in the photo who were often my family and friends. I would try so hard to smile and look happy, but I was dead inside.

I learned to try and workaround this by exaggerating my expression - trying to get a big silly smile to hide the sad story my eyes were telling. The cover up got noticed and my family would ask why I always made a "cartoon face" in photos.

This was part of the torture of being an active alcoholic, the most potent reminder of

the horror that life had become. It forced me to see that being happy had become almost impossible in any real sense. Here is my family and my friends, happy and joyful in this photo, and there's me in the middle of it all, dying.

That was defeat for me - I had lost at life. These photos show my life going on around me, often in beautiful ways, and I am not there.

My wife at the time was a big social media user and these photos were often, sometimes daily. Torture..... daily.

Of course the best way to deal with the pain of all this was to have another drink, to do more stupid, shameful stuff and drain my soul a little more before the next photo op. But that's another story.

~Mark L

# Complete Defeat

For me, complete defeat came in stages. At each stage I truly believed I was defeated, and yet my disease and my ego were not finished with me. My first defeat came after my last drunk. Waking the morning after, with my wife in tears beside me in bed and calmly announcing that if this behavior continued she would leave, I knew that I could not continue the way I always had. I had used AA as a last resort, telling my wife that if I can't control my drinking I will go to AA and quit forever. After my last drunk it was time to pay the piper.

Listening to the reading "More About Alcoholism" at the beginning of my first ever AA meeting was my second defeat, and yet my happiest moment. It was in that instance that I admitted I was powerless over alcohol and I realized that my vain attempts to control my drinking would lead to nothing but incomprehensible demoralization and death.

This moment of defeat and the accompanying surrender was truly liberating. I finally saw the years of counting drinks, using apps to track my consumption, making promises, reading self-help books, switching between different types of alcohol for what they were: the desperate attempts of my disease to keep me in its thrall.

Awaking from this insanity was akin to being reborn. However, with this relief came self-confidence and arrogance. I shut my ears and my mind to all the words and advice that were being freely given by experienced fellows in the program. I believed that by just not drinking my life would become manageable and all of my problems would go away. As many of us know this is not the case.

In the end it took eighteen months and my third defeat. Eighteen months of hovering on the periphery of the program, attending a meeting

every week or two, not working the steps nor being of service to other alcoholics. During this time it was slowly dawning on me that although I was powerless over alcohol and my life had become unmanageable, independent of alcohol it still continued to be unmanageable. The realization that my disease ran far deeper than an addiction to alcohol was terrifying. I came to understand that alcohol was not my problem but actually my solution. Over the years the dosage required to quieten my brain and give me the numbing sensation I needed to obliterate my problems temporarily had become lethal. When the medicine stops working one needs to find alternative remedies.

In my naivety I tried to find a softer, easier way. I ignored the experience of other fellows who had what I wanted and believed that I knew better. How wrong I was!

Eighteen months of trying to do my version of the program ended in my most recent and complete defeat. My life had become truly unmanageable: I was at a crossroads with seemingly only two paths to take. On the left was picking up a drink and descending into what I knew would be a death spiral of alcoholism. Whilst on the right, thoughts of suicide and self-destruction. It was at this moment when I was granted a third way, the realization that all those other fellows who had what I wanted had also been at a similar juncture. It was finally, at this moment, I admitted complete defeat. I got down on my knees and, for the first time in my life, I prayed. I committed to putting aside my ego, my self-centeredness, and committed to working the 12 steps with honesty, open-mindedness and willingness.

I continue to do so every day of my life and in turn, I am granted a daily reprieve.  
~ Tom H.

## The moment of complete defeat

Lying sprawled on the living room floor. My wife, her face deep with worry and incomprehension, staring down at me. "You need to get help".

Next morning being taken to an AA meeting like a small, unwilling child to school.

Saying, "My name is Marcus and I'm an alcoholic".

The moment of complete defeat was not some great calamity, rather a final admission that everything was not "all ok" as I had increasingly, shakily, in all senses of the word, tried to pretend it was.

The reality was my world had become a dark, tightening spiral downwards into a personal, private hell completely dominated by alcohol. I was trapped. I knew I was an alcoholic but completely incapable of admitting it to anyone. After all who wants to be married to an alcoholic, or employ one? As long as I could keep pretending it was "all ok" I would keep wading my way from one alcohol soaked day to the next.

I was resigned to drinking myself to death, which to most normal people would sound like utter defeat, but in my twisted reality that defeat would be asking for help to stop the inevitable.

When the facade finally shattered and I walked shaking and unwilling into an AA meeting I found I did not so much need to ask for help as it was being freely offered to me.

It was a Traditions meeting. It made no sense.

It didn't matter, it seemed calming and safe.

At some point I plucked up the courage to say "Hi, my name is Marcus and I'm an alcoholic".

There it was done, I'd admitted defeat.

It was a huge relief, a turning point, that allowed me to take that help I needed to rebuild my life, sober a day at a time.

Marcus



## WHO cares to admit...

*"We admitted we were powerless over alcohol - that our lives had become unmanageable." WHO cares to admit complete defeat? Practically no one, of course.*

*Step One - (pp. 21-24) - Alcoholics Anonymous*

Me and many 'others' who arrived at the doors of AA Rooms found recovery as drunks, when we admitted we were alcoholics and our lives had become unmanageable, when we became Alcoholics, our miracles began. The difference between an alcoholic and a drunk are these damn meetings.

Once I got honest with myself, admitting I was an alcoholic, my defeat turned into my surrender. I became powerless over people, places and things. At last, I found my kind of people, I'd been searching for them all my life. For the first time, I felt a sense of belonging - in these rooms.

April 4th, 1979, I arrived at Freeport, NY Detox Hospital, hung over from, hopefully, my last fling with booze at the YMCA Hotel. Down the street from 34th St Pennsylvania Railroad Station, Madison Square Garden.

I had just got hired, full time, at a large Insurance Company at one of New York City's most prestigious addresses... Rockefeller Plaza in Mid Manhattan. I had arrived. I went to a party to celebrate, to have just a few. To this day, I have no idea how long my run lasted. ATM machines had just come out, heaven for this high functioning drunk with a little bank account. I put in my card, entered

my code, and out pops a \$20 bill. Next door was a liquor store. I buy a 5th of cheap vodka, whose brand name I forget and trot back to my hotel room with a TV set, to drink. It was 'Gorgie' Vodka. God, I just gotta remember that important stuff, you know...

I have no idea how long this 'run' of celebration lasted, but I do know my bank account was now on 'insufficient funds' status. I always wore jewelry, so I crossed the street to the pawn shop and took the cash to buy more liquor. Eventually this came to a screeching halt when I'd pawned all my jewelry. Poor me, Poor Me. Pour me another drink. I wanted more booze! I was evicted from the YMCA for not paying my bill and I'd run out of money, jewelry and booze. Nothing was left. I took my \$20 dollar bill from my emergency fund hidden in my shoe, purchased a ticket at the Long Island Railroad, Penn Station, and went home. Back to Freeport. Not once did I contact my job or my father the whole time I was boozing. I was having too much fun.

When I got home, I walked in the house like I went on a vacation to Hawaii. I walked into the house and my Dad told me to call Shirley, my boss, immediately. She told me to come back to work now, I told her next week. I was hallucinating, hearing songs in my head and I felt like shit in capital letters. I was a mess. Shirley advised me to come in today.

I made an appointment for you to see Dr. Brown, the company's physician. Sitting in his office across from his desk, the good doctor said I was "lucky". He continued, there is a Detox Hospital in Freeport where you lived, would I go? I had no idea what a Detox Hospital was. I asked, was there a surgeon there? Doctor Brown asked, why would I need a Surgeon? I

replied to remove this radio in my head playing this same song over and over again, it was driving me nuts. The doctor assured me a surgeon would be on standby. This black station wagon arrived at my building and drove around Manhattan, picking up a few more passengers. We were all strangers to each other, we rode in silence. Eventually we arrive at Freeport Detox Hospital looking like zombies - death warmed over. We were a glum lot!

Thus my miracle of going to a local detox on my Doctor's suggestion, having a radio removed from my head, then entering a rehab program up in Rheinbeck, NY. After 30 days, I was discharged and attended my 1st AA meeting in Freeport which was an Anniversary meeting.

The speaker, LaVern W., 8 years sober, reached out to this newcomer, me. He drove me home and for the next two days he picked me up for evening meetings. That Friday night, he suggested that I go to Roosevelt WE CARE at 10:30 am on Saturday morning and I listened. Roosevelt became my 1st Home Group and I still attend this same meeting via Zoom. LaVern became my 1st AA Sponsor who celebrated 50 years of continued Sobriety in September 2021. I was honored to be one of his Speakers.

The miracle of AA happens in our lives when you work the program as it is written and take those suggestions.

1st Step - I can't.

2nd Step - He can.

Our 3rd Step - let Him.

~ TonyT/San Francisco, CA  
Last drink - April 4th, 1979



# What does complete defeat look like?

Complete defeat looks like me last Thursday morning when I turned up to my first AA meeting voluntarily, still intoxicated from the night before, with no sleep and a large gash on my forehead.

I was completely defeated.

I finally realized that through my drinking, I had lived every nightmare I ever had. My own self-will and obsession to drink had driven me into a dark pit of hallucinations, blackouts, and despair.

Seeing that night, both of my children and my husband were scared of me, and scared for me. I was sick, a very sick person.

Finally beaten, after 46 years, I reached out for help. I fanatically searched online, found the next AA meeting and got in a taxi - nervous, excited, scared, sick, and broken.

Arriving at my first AA meeting I did not know what to believe. I heard God and the Higher Power being talked about a lot but I was here to listen, here to hear from people who had admitted powerlessness before me, people who were on the way to recovery. I was at the very beginning.

I can see why AA presence is now found in over 180 nations worldwide, and over 123,000 groups, with membership estimated at over 2.5 million people.

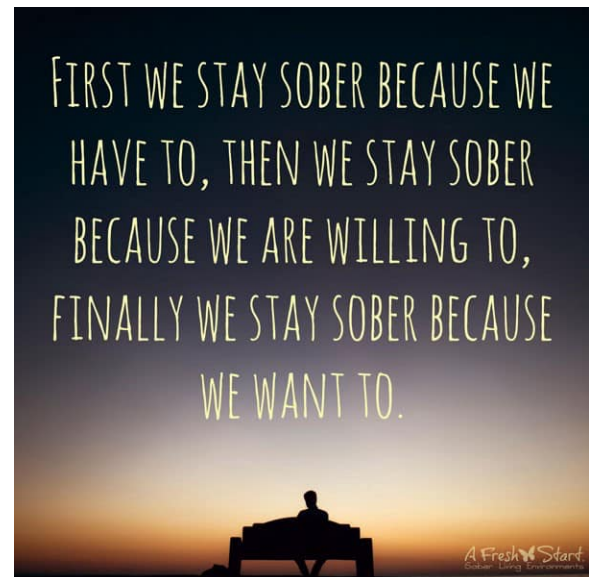
The selflessness and humility of the fellows from this very first AA meeting, they listened to my story, helped wipe away my tears, offered me their phone numbers and took me to coffee was all so extraordinary, like no other kindness or compassion I had ever experienced from complete strangers before.

After that day 1 of admitting Step 1, powerlessness over alcohol and that my life had become unmanageable, I now feel like I belong. I belong in AA as I am an Alcoholic and I know now I am not a bad person just a sick person, with a disease that I am prepared to work on to manage every single friggin day.

I came to AA to stop my drinking but I am staying here to change my thinking.

Kicking ass in life, one day at a time.

~Rachel





## What does complete defeat look like for me?

An amazing question and as I write this, I can't believe I'm going to say this, I was completely defeated about 6 months ago.

From a professional and personal perspective, I had achieved all the checkboxes one would want at my age – healthy kids, still married, professional success. As a very focused, self driven individual, there was nothing I thought I couldn't achieve when I put my mind to it.

Earlier, I was a poker addict. 7 years ago, I quit cold turkey. Further evidence to bolster my false suppositions. The first time I went to rehab, I said all the right things but had no intention of leaving alcohol forever – I thought, "I will make my family happy and 'learn' how to drink like normal people". But last year I actually tried to stop. I went to another rehab in the US and went to a sober house after that. I told myself that I'd done it. I was sober. I'd done it on my own terms – no intervention required. Subsequently, for 6 months, despite all best intentions, I went on benders and then periods of, not sobriety, but just knowing if I drank, I would be ill. So maybe I didn't drink 2 days at a time. I tried and tried to stop the next bender, but sure enough, eventually at 7 in the morning, 7-11 would be calling for me to come buy my morning vodka. So I had 2 choices – drink myself to death, or seek help.

As crazy as it sounds, seeking help at the time meant defeat for me. It meant I couldn't do it on my own. I had tried every intellectual, physical, and medical solution

that I could fathom and none of them worked. Alcoholism had brought me to my knees. Today, I look back and am amazed that I acknowledged defeat. It doesn't come easy. I must've been in the gutter. For the first time in my life the words "Hi, I'm XXX, I'm an alcoholic", came out of my mouth with no shame, no embarrassment, no indignation. It was just an acknowledgement of fact.

It takes courage to acknowledge to oneself that you've lost. But, at least for me, while admitting defeat, you can enact the change to win. Defeat isn't a finality but to overcome it takes hard work. To use a sports analogy, it means you've been in a soccer match playing 1x1 and you're down 10-0. It's halftime. Coaches give you a pep talk. They tell you to involve your teammates, play a team game. Time to recruit/play like a kickass team and win. But you're down 10-0, it won't be easy.

~XXX

## Complete Defeat

For me, defeat came in waves. If we look at the word in the dictionary it tells us that the meaning of the word is 'to lose a battle or a contest'. However, if we look at this from a military or tactical perspective, being defeated in a battle doesn't necessarily mean you have lost the war.

My life seems to have been a relentless series of battles. I don't recall ever winning any to be honest, and even when I have been blessed with a victory it is always short lived. You see, I was at war with an enemy I could not perceive, touch or hear. An enemy so skilled at subterfuge that it would have me fighting those that would be my allies, or myself. Such a skilled assassin was it that I never knew it was there.

Now if we add another word and make it into 'complete defeat', it takes on a whole new meaning entirely. The war is lost at this point, our allies gone, diplomacy is over and we are bleeding out on the battlefield. Many of my battles during my 20-year war have resulted in what appeared inevitable at the time - loss of jobs, loss of relationships, loss of health.

The final throw was not necessarily anything new. The difference in this case was when I saw the enemy. When I heard them. Complete defeat came when I realised that I am not a terrible person. That I am worth something. Complete defeat came when I realised there was

something beyond my control sabotaging all my efforts and furiously gunning for my death and destruction.

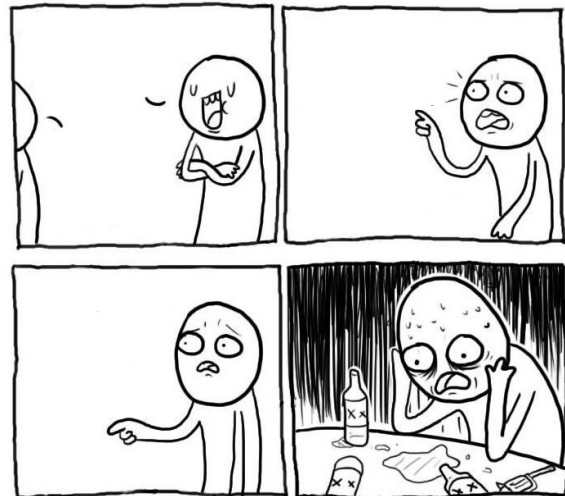
Complete defeat is your last loved ones turning away from you. The final moments where all you have worked for is slipping through your hands.

It is crawling broken on hands and knees into a room of complete strangers and begging for help. The old battle plans will never work.

For me, complete defeat came on white wings, because it led me to understand the reason why I have lost so much before, why I never won. It led me to the doors of AA and the grace of a meeting, to the hope that I can get better and to the tools to start building a new life.

Complete defeat showed me I am not so bad.

~Anon



## Step One for Bill W.

December 11, 1934, remains one of the important dates in AA history—the day Bill W. guzzled his last drink en route to Towns Hospital. But the events leading up to this fortunate event also provide important reflection.

On a “bleak day in November” (p. 8) Ebby T. carried his Oxford Group message of sobriety to Bill who was extremely impressed, but the gin and pineapple juice cocktail on the kitchen table won the day. Yet Ebby visited again, which ignited his curiosity enough to produce a visit to the Calvary Mission where Ebby was a resident. This was on Friday, December 7th. However, Bill drank on the way and began a drunken “testimony” from the podium.

Bill spent Saturday and Sunday, December 8th and 9th, in his bedroom tapering off. Amazingly Bill then, temporarily, lost all desire to drink, however, he came home roaring on Monday, December 10th. This provoked an argument with his wife, Lois who angrily lamented: “You don’t even have the decency to die! You’re crazy! You’re crazy!” Upon which Bill picked up her small sewing machine and slammed it against the wall. Lois was, of course, terrified!

Bill rode the subways that night, panhandling funds for a bottle of booze. (Just imagine!) He came back home on Tuesday morning, December 11th and when he noticed the damaged wall caused by his drinking episode, he fell into deep remorse. Recalling Ebby’s success he left a note for Lois explaining he was off to Towns Hospital for yet another treatment (He had been treated there several times previously). The train fare Brooklyn to South Manhattan was a nickel and, fortunately for us, Bill had six cents left. Then he espied a store where he still had credit and departed with four bottles of beer.

Bill arrived at Towns Hospital with a beer in one hand and two philosophy books in the other. He announced to his loyal physician, Dr. William Duncan Silkworth, that he had found an answer. This was Bill’s final treatment at Town’s Hospital. He never drank again!

Page 13 of the Big Book explains how, after Ebby’s visit, Bill ingested the basic ingredients of what now constitutes our Twelve Steps. This was December 13, 1934, seven days after his first trip to Calvary Mission. Bill, on that day, had a sudden and profound spiritual experience (P 14). If not for Bill’s final surrender to Step One during those seven days in December, AA would not be here today.

~Bob S, Richmond, Indiana

## The spill of defeat



They say that a frog in a saucepan  
Does not feel the water get hot  
I guess that is what I was doing  
I was drinking and I couldn't stop

The temperature it was growing  
My time felt like mine less and less  
But apparently I didn't notice  
I was boiling under the stress

Yet some part of me it was screaming  
Get out of the water you fool!  
I was drinking all secret and lonely  
A concrete bench for my bar stool

So I capsized the pot by exploding  
Got so drunk they just had to know  
As my world flew around would the pieces  
Recover and on with the show?

In the spill of defeat I just lay there  
Wondering how in the world to get up  
When God spoke to me through my most loved one  
Said there's AA, why don't you sign up?

I wept like a baby and maybe  
That moment was like being born  
Defeat was one way of life dying  
That first meeting like a new dawn.

# Part 2

## What saved you?

I want the hand of AA  
to always be there....

It was the unconditional love of a Fellow that saved my life in every way. By the time we met, I had already been in and out for 3 years. We clicked right away. He had everything I wanted, especially a wry sense of humor when it came to sobriety and all that entailed in getting on with life.

Sometimes I could get a few months up, and every time I truly thought I had this beat. But as we all know, after brief recovery comes a worse and even more demoralizing relapse.

Invariably I went out again. This time for over a year. It was Covid times, so we didn't see each other as often. Our friendship was still there and he'd check on me, even though he knew I was out drinking. He never badgered me to come back in, but I always knew the door was open and a hug was waiting when I decided it was time. I think we both knew someday I'd be back.

When it did happen it was dramatic. I was seriously ill. But even through my illness, my pride and shame kept me from coming back. I remember lying on my couch totally defeated. He said gently "Just come back, we're your family, no-one will judge, everyone will just be so happy to have you back with us".

Was it a spiritual awakening? Who can say. But in that moment of complete vulnerability, I knew I was loved absolutely. And I wanted to live.

~Anon

## What's Saving Me These Days is Primary Purpose!

Lately what's been saving me is the last line of the Preamble, (published in the June 1947 Grapevine) that states, "Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety." That helps keep me focused, especially when I can get easily distracted with things like wanting to be liked by everyone, wanting to be included in everything, and wanting to win the prize for Most Liked Person of AA Singapore, etc, etc. It takes away a good chunk of the pressure, the expectations, and reminds me why I am here—to stay sober and to help others do the same.

When I apply it in other areas of my life, like work, it helps me stay focused there, too, and releases a lot of the pressure I put on myself to receive constant validation and approval, not even so much in my actual work but validation for who I am (and it's not their job to do that!).

At work my primary purpose is to get the job done well, and help others get the job done well too. To do that I need to get a

good night's sleep, pay attention, listen and learn, face fears of doing something new, face responsibility, push myself sometimes out of my comfort zone, and keep coming back. When the people pleasing, validation seeking addict takes over in me I feel a sense of shame and anxiety and am left feeling unsafe. I believe that is because it is not my Higher Power's will for me, so it just doesn't sit right. I'm getting better at listening to my Higher Power's voice.

When I come into something with no expectations other than sticking to my primary purpose (stay sober, do the job, be a good mom, be a good partner) and help others, I feel a lot more serene. This alcoholic likes to complicate things, and having a primary purpose simplifies my life a great deal and then I am able to build self-esteem and help others. It also removes my will out of things and allows God's will to be done. I am very grateful today for my Primary Purpose!

~ Margaret

## What saved me?

In no particular order:

- Love
- Fate
- God
- Luck
- Bill W
- Cheap brandy
- Lessons learned from childhood
- Damian Hall
- Sharing
- Listening
- The steps
- My family
- Meetings
- Bus rides in the dark
- Connection
- A diagnosis
- Opening up
- Letting go
- Reflections
- Travelers from other places
- Just for Today
- Prayer

## What saved me?

What saved me!

Standing in a storm and looking up to the blue sky.  
Sitting in Church and feeling like the worst sinner.  
Letting go of hate that was killing me.  
Falling to my knees, when I had everything and nothing.  
The darkness had to take me; so I could stand up to face the world.  
Look it in the eye and say I'm here, I'm you and you are me.  
This lifeboat has room, sit with me. Share your journey, and I'll tell you mine.  
Hold my hand and say "it's fine."  
We've got some time.  
One day at a time.

~Eimaer

## What saved you?

This is an interesting Subject.  
May I quote the following;

*We claim spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection. Our description of the alcoholic, the chapter to the agnostic, and our personal adventures before and after make clear three pertinent ideas: ... (b) That probably no human power could have relieved our alcoholism.*

As I understand, WE can do what I can't do alone. Alcoholics Anonymous was started by Bill Wilson & Dr. Bob Smith who got together in Akron, Ohio. Bob sat in Bill's kitchen talking about 'drinking booze', not Alcohol. I never drank alcohol. I drank & bought Liquor. They talked about drinking Booze all night and that morning Bill & Bob discovered they did not get the urge to drink during their whole time spent together talking about drinking. Total Strangers. These two gentlemen discovered a 'thing' that has plagued man since grapes were first crushed. (Not to mention the ale ancient Egyptians drank that probably caused 'drunkenness' there also). But AA does not wish to engage in any controversy.... so I am getting back to the subject and staying focused ... 'THEY', Bill & Bob, SAVED ME AND MILLIONS MORE. This Devine Meeting of these two-men meetings in Akron, Ohio, later to be known as Alcoholics Anonymous, or AA.

Bill's decision that evening in that Akron Hotel was so fateful. If he turned right he would go to sit on a bar stool, but he chose to walk left to the lobby phone booth to make a telephone call to Bob, a

stranger, to ask if he could come over. Bill got Bob's telephone number from a lady friend who knew a drunk who lived in Akron. To me, this was truly a divine intervention. And to this day, a simple telephone call to another recovered AA member has saved many members the pain from picking up that 1st drink. They stayed sober after the phone call. 12 Step work is still an important tool in our AA program.

To answer the question 'WHAT SAVED YOU?' - GOD COULD AND WOULD IF HE WAS SOUGHT is my answer.

God, whom I choose to call my Higher Power, has been in my whole life. Out of rehab on a Wednesday looking at a Nassau County AA Meeting Guide. I took a cab across town to my 1st AA meeting that evening. All the tables were covered with white paper and streamers hung from the ceilings. I was scared to death. It looked like a Party was going on. A party & drinking were one of the same. I ended up in the kitchen. I asked this Lady, where was the AA Meeting? She said, this was it - "Grab a cup of coffee and go sit down". It was an Anniversary meeting.

The main speaker, Lavern W., was wonderful. At Rehab they told us if we like the speaker tell them at the end of the meeting. These simple suggestions told in AA changed my life beginning from that moment. During the coffee break, I went up to this guy - excuse me Sir, I liked your share, my name is Tony and this is my first meeting. I'd just got out of rehab that afternoon and I turned to run back to my seat in the rear of the room. He put his arm around me and introduced me to everyone in that room. I could have killed him. He asked me where did I live,



I told him in Freeport and he said 'good, I do too, I'll drive you home'. Now he knew where I lived. What are you doing tomorrow? I said nothing. Good, be ready at 7pm, I'll take you to a meeting. He picked me up at 7pm on the dot and this went on for several days. Now it was Friday evening and back home from another meeting he asked what I do on a Saturday? Nothing, I said.

I worked in the City and was off on the weekends and Lavern said good, go to Roosevelt WE CARE AA at 10:30 for the morning meeting in the next town over. I did. That man with 8 years of Sobriety became my Sponsor & Roosevelt WE CARE became my first Home Group which I still attend via Zoom today. Lavern did not 'SAVE' me. We don't 'SAVE' FOLKS IN AA. WE 'SHARED' with each other. What Lavern did was to share his experience, strength and hope with me. He carried the Message of AA as his sponsor, Chad, carried it to him and Chad's sponsor, Cosgrove, carried the AA message to Chad. We don't drink, we go to meetings, we don't drink between meetings, we call our sponsor and we do service and we reach out to the newcomers like Lavern reached out to me at my 1st meeting,

though he was a total stranger to me at the time. We read the Big Book, did the Steps and practiced these Steps & Principals in all our affairs. This is a very simple program for very complicated people. The elevator to Sobriety is out-of-order. Please, please use the steps.

My Higher Power placed that man at my 1st AA meeting to guide me in this program. We will intuitively know God can do for us what we can not do for ourselves. On September 7th, 2021, I was one of Lavern's 3 speakers celebrating his 50th year of AA Sobriety at his Anniversary Zoom meeting in Brooklyn, NY.

I live in San Francisco, CA. I showed up, speaking at Lavern's anniversary meeting where my AA life began in Freeport, NY, 42 years prior, just out of rehab. What a Honor to speak at his anniversary, what a Gift. AA works, if you work it. If it works, don't fix it. You change, you don't change AA.

~ Tony T

# The Gift of Desperation

I woke up in Desperation, Half a century ago  
I had squandered all my options and, I had no place to go.  
Guilt and Shame and Loathing thoughts weighed, heavy on my mind  
But I was used to waking up, with dark thoughts of that kind  
My drinking used to mask the feelings, that I felt that day.  
And if I ventured just one sip, they'd soon be washed away  
As I look back on that event, it's very plain to see  
The thought that gripped my conscience was, A New Reality  
It was my Day of Reckoning and, I Cherish it today  
For without that Desperation I, may not have called AA  
Within moments of exposure to that kind and loving group  
The drink obsession vanished. Optimism closed that loop.  
Thinking someday I'd be tempted; I was vigilant from the start.  
And since it never happened, I thank God with all my heart  
For decades I have questioned why it works so well for me  
While watching others suffer through a life of misery  
When asked that simple question I now answer with a smile  
It happened when Desperation far Outweighed my own Denial

~Rick R

# The Importance of Step Twelve

## *Freedom from all Unresolved Mental Issues*

In Chapter 11 of the Big Book (*A Vision for You*) it starts off by reminiscing about the early days of an alcoholic's drinking and how it gave us the feeling that life was good, but not so in the later times. It then talks about the hideous four horsemen, *Terror, Bewilderment, Frustration, and Despair*, and then the next line is: *Unhappy drinkers who read this page will understand.* When I read that Chapter I knew that I was qualified, as it was the blueprint of my life up to that moment.

*What I didn't understand* was that drinking was but a symptom of a much deeper-rooted *emotional problem* and after many years of sobriety, I still had trouble articulating how one caused the other. In the first paragraph of *Step Twelve* in the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (12&12) it talks about finding *emotional sobriety*. What emotions are we talking about, that's what I wanted to know?

As a child, I had very little supervision and I grew up in a dysfunctional environment. I did a lot of things that I was ashamed of, but I never knew how these things would come back to haunt me later in life. As I started drinking, it *immediately relieved me of the guilt and shame*, and it even gave me license to continue acting badly as long as I could rationalize and lie about my behavior. The only thing that I hadn't considered was that *I couldn't hide from my Conscience, and it plagued me* till I couldn't sleep at night without drinking myself into oblivion. *I had been a taker all*

*my life.* I never got enough of what I thought I needed. I was insecure. I had no self-esteem. No one had any respect for me except for the (*want to be*) losers like myself. *Guilt and shame*, brought on by a *hundred forms of fear ruled my mind.* Not a happy way to live!

When they ask me what freedom I cherish the most as the result of practicing the program, most of my fellow members would expect me to say freedom from Alcohol, but they would be mistaken. I would reply that the *freedom from all those unresolved mental issues that plagued me to the point that only a drink would quiet my mind.* The hope that I experienced the minute I embraced this program, at the level of my innermost self, removed the obsession to drink alcohol and it has never returned. I no longer have any fear of alcohol.

Having cleaned up the wreckage of the past by thoroughly taking the steps and ridding myself of the selfish motives, my conscience is clear. My self-esteem is High, and the feeling of wellbeing is my constant companion. I'm so glad that I didn't fall into that category that becomes complacent and think that I could rest on my laurels (as they say) at any point as I understand the meaning of Step Twelve suggests, *Practicing These Principles in all our Affairs.* I try always to be an asset and never a liability. I am neither a victim or perpetrator. I am always willing to make things right as best I can. I can be trusted and relied upon. I feel that I am on the positive side of the ledger.

Peace of mind and a quiet heart have been my goal ever since I entered A. A. and I am happy to say that I haven't been disappointed. One of my favorite prayers

is: *Thank You God; it's everything you promised it would be.*

~Rick R

## This Precious Gift

They say four billion years ago life showed its face on earth.

And as it happened, man became, the product of that birth

Then grapes appeared upon the vine, eight thousand years just past.

Their juice, when crushed, seemed harmless, when enjoyed with repast.

But like most things that seem so fine, and too good to be true,

A darker side revealed the lure that many came to rue.

When smitten by this patient foe the bearers have no shield,

And when the choice is yea or nay, the stricken always yield.

So shameful was this malady, a moral thing they said.

Their families kept their secret safe, long after they were dead.

Centuries have come and gone, since first it got its grip,

And one in ten would pay the price, when venturing one sip.

Then God saw fit to intervene and offer up a choice,

And Bill and Bob were listening and heard his loving voice.

How fortunate we are today, to be among the first,

to have been chosen, at this time, to quell that deadly thirst.

The wisdom of eight thousand years is placed there at our feet.

How blessed to have it waiting, as I stumbled in defeat.

When pondering the suffering crossed, that vast expanse of time,

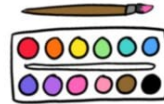
I would not waste one moment of His precious gift sublime.

~Rick R.

# THE BENEFITS OF Sobriety

@POSITIVELYPRESENT

POWER OVER  
YOUR OWN STORY

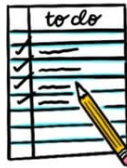


HEIGHTENED  
COMPASSION



EXPLORATION  
OF NEW HOBBIES

SO MUCH  
MORE FREE TIME



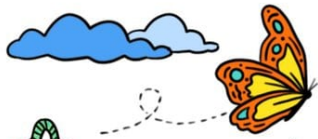
INCREASED  
SELF-AWARENESS



ENHANCED  
PRODUCTIVITY



CREATION OF  
BOUNDARIES



INSPIRING  
PERSONAL GROWTH

AMPLIFICATION  
OF SELF-LOVE



STRONGER  
RELATIONSHIPS