

# *Fellowship Centre Newsletter: February 2024*



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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Welcome to February in Alberta and it's not all bad! The days are getting noticeably longer. At the beginning of February, Edmonton sees approximately nine hours of sunlight each day but, by the end of February, it will be close to eleven hours daily. February is also important because of Family Day which is the third Monday of the month. Family Day in Alberta was first celebrated in 1990, making it the only province to have a statutory holiday in February until Saskatchewan began observing the day in 2007.

Families are an important part of the recovery journey. I continue to approach family support groups such as Al-Anon and Nar-Anon but so far have not been successful in having a meeting open at the Centre. If anyone at the Centre asks about support for families, please direct them to the pamphlets table at the Centre for pamphlets on Al-Anon and Nar-Anon. The Centre's website includes links to **SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES**. Click on the link to **MORE HELP**, scroll down until you get to the section below.

### SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES

Al-Anon: Hope and Help for Family and Friends Alcoholics	Nar-Anon Family Groups	Parents Empowering Parents	Families for Addiction Recovery
			
<a href="#">Learn More</a>	<a href="#">Learn More</a>	<a href="#">Learn More</a>	<a href="#">Learn More</a>

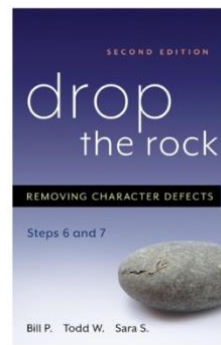
Wishing you a sunny February, a happy Family Day and, above all, a clean and sober February.

Yours in service, Wayne W.

# MANY WAYS TO CARRY THE MESSAGE

## Fellowship Library Used Books Needed

You may have noticed that shelves have been installed above the pamphlet table (thank you, Robert). The shelves were needed because the pamphlet table was getting crowded but also because the Centre is starting a library. Please donate used books directly related to recovery from any addiction. Thank you to those who have already donated books, but many more books are needed. The borrowing process will be informal, although every book will be clearly labelled FELLOWSHIP LIBRARY - BORROW AND RETURN WHEN FINISHED. (If someone fails to return a book, they are welcome to keep it.) Leave donated books on the library shelf. Call or text 780-220-7811 if more information is required. Thank you for your generosity. There are many ways to help carry the message of recovery.



## Cleaning Volunteers Needed



The Fellowship Centre is growing. In January 2023 there were 18 weekly meetings at the Centre. In January 2024 there are 26 weekly meetings at the Centre. Additionally, attendance at meetings is increasing. This growth has resulted in the need to organize cleaning volunteers. Any individual or group who can assume weekly cleaning responsibility, please sign up on the sheet that is on the Meeting Chairperson Table. Thank you to those groups and individuals who have already committed to help ensure that the Centre is clean and welcoming. Some tasks are small and manageable (disinfecting the

tabletops); some tasks are much more labor intense (vacuuming and washing the floor). Every little bit helps. Cleaning service might just keep you clean and sober and help you continue to grow along spiritual lines!

## Contribute to the Newsletter

The first Fellowship Newsletter was published in June 2022. Since then, the Newsletter has grown in popularity. There are now approximately 100 people reading the Newsletter every month. The Fellowship Newsletter focusses on 12-Step recovery, current research related to addiction recovery, meetings and upcoming events held at the Centre, as well as information about the Centre such as financial reports and the Annual General Meeting minutes. Please consider contributing to the monthly newsletter. Share anything that may support the recovery journey of others such as: your experience, strength, and hope; relevant podcasts that have helped you; stories of recovery that you find online; jokes and cartoons; and inspirational messages. Please email your submissions to [editor@fellowship-centre.org](mailto:editor@fellowship-centre.org). Include your name and home group so that your contribution can be acknowledged or indicate that the submission is anonymous. Don't worry about spelling or grammar as the Editor will make any necessary improvements.



## HISTORY OF THE SERENITY PRAYER

The Serenity Prayer is an invocation by the petitioner for wisdom to understand the difference between circumstances ("things") that can and cannot be changed, asking courage to act in the case of the former, and serenity to accept in the case of the latter.

Reinhold Niebuhr (1892-1971) wrote the original version of the serenity prayer that reads: "O God and Heavenly Father, grant to us the serenity of mind to accept that which cannot be changed, courage to change that which can be changed, and wisdom to know the one from the other through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen."

The prayer has achieved very wide distribution, spreading through the YWCA and other groups in the 1930s, and in Alcoholics Anonymous and related organizational materials since 1941. Since the early 1960s, commercial enterprises such as Hallmark Cards have used the prayer in its greeting cards and gift items.

### Serenity Prayer

God grant me the serenity  
to accept the things I cannot change;  
courage to change the things I can;  
and wisdom to know the difference.

Living one day at a time;  
Enjoying one moment at a time;  
Accepting hardships as the pathway to peace;  
Taking, as Jesus did, this sinful world  
as it is, not as I would have it;  
Trusting that He will make all things right  
if I surrender to His Will;  
That I may be reasonably happy in this life  
and supremely happy with Him  
Forever in the next.  
Amen.  
--Reinhold Niebuhr

## Serenity & Acceptance in Recovery



1. Learn to identify what is in and out of your control
2. Don't worry about things you cannot control and accept them as they are
3. Have courage to take action on things you can control



### **Everybody, Somebody, Nobody, and Anybody**

Once upon a time in an A.A. group there were four people:

Their names were Everybody, Somebody, Nobody, and Anybody.

Whenever there was an important service job to do

Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it.

Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did it.

When Nobody did it, Everybody got angry because it was Everybody's job.

Everybody thought Somebody would do it,

But Nobody realized that Nobody would do it.

So consequently Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what

Anybody could have done in the first place.

Does this sound like your group?

*Be the change you want to see in your group!*



### **The Two Wolves (from <https://lonerwolf.com/two-wolves-story/>)**

One day an old Cherokee man sits down with his grandson to teach him about life.

"A fight is going on inside of me," he says to the boy. "It's a terrible fight between two wolves. One is evil – he is full of rage, jealousy, arrogance, greed, sorrow, regret, lies, laziness, and self-pity."

He continues, "The other is good – he is filled with love, joy, peace, generosity, truth, empathy, courage, humility, and faith. This same fight is going on inside the hearts of everyone, including you."

The grandson thinks about this for a few minutes, and then asks his grandfather, "Which wolf wins?"

The old Cherokee simply replies, "The one you feed."





# WINTER BLUES

Winter can be a difficult time in Alberta. It is cold and it is dark. Being trapped inside, with a shortage of daylight hours and a lack of vitamin D, is not conducive to feeling upbeat and joyful. Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is a type of depression that has a seasonal pattern. Scientists do not totally understand what causes SAD, but there are some theories. During the winter, people with SAD may have lower levels of the feel-good hormone serotonin in their nerve cells. They may also overproduce the hormone melatonin, which is important for sleep-wake cycle, in the winter, leading to lethargic feelings.

The “winter blues” is a term used to describe a mild form of SAD that occurs during the winter months. Common symptoms of the winter blues include – feeling down, lethargy, fatigue and drowsiness, anxiety, irritability, and a withdrawing from others. For people in recovery, the winter blues can be particularly trying, even dangerous! Feelings such as sadness and anger can act as triggers for someone trying to manage a substance or behaviour addiction.

When the dark cold days come, and the winter blues present themselves, some people may self-medicate with substances. A lack of energy may cause some to turn to stimulants. Others may seek to numb the pain of depression with drugs like opioids or alcohol. Research has shown that some individuals with alcoholism misuse alcohol seasonally, so they may be self-medicating SAD. Self-medicating with substances may lead to addiction. While self-medicating may feel effective in the moment, it may worsen depressive symptoms overall and lead to substance dependence.

## Managing the Winter Blues

Lifestyle and recovery program changes can help those experiencing the winter blues.

- Make your environment sunnier and brighter by doing things like opening your blinds and sitting closer to bright windows during the day.
- Get outside as much as possible.
- Exercise regularly and maintain a healthy, balanced diet.
- Normalize sleep patterns by scheduling reliable wake and bedtimes.
- Prioritize self-care. Take time to do activities that bring joy and help boost your mood (for example, take a walk, create art, spend time doing your favorite hobby).
- Increase the number of meetings attended each week.
- Increase prayer and meditation efforts.
- Reach out to others in recovery. If you are not suffering with the winter blues, go through your phone and call people who you haven’t seen for a while. If you are suffering from winter blues, remember your friends in recovery and reach out to them.
- Remind yourself that drinking, drugging, or engaging in problematic behaviour never make you feel better in the long term.



# PROFANITY IN 12 STEP RECOVERY MEETINGS

(Summarized from <http://aa-eci.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/August-2015-Newsletter.pdf>)

In the tens of thousands of words written by Bill W. and the many hours of recorded talks by both Bill and Dr. Bob, including the first 700 issues of the Grapevine, there is not one case of profanity. Why is that? Is it that neither Bill nor Bob ever used vulgar language? That doesn't seem likely. They lived in the real world. But it does seem clear they didn't include such words as part of their AA practice. They were on a spiritual journey; words had weight and were chosen carefully. And the fact that they chose to open and close meetings with words of prayer says, even today, that their meetings, now our meetings, are meant to address a higher purpose. The question for us is, should we be guided by their example?

## Bill's Words on Profanity

When reading any of Bill's writings it is important to understand that he was once a barroom brawler and had once lost a job for fighting with a taxi driver. He was no stranger to profanity or loud and aggressive behavior. His spiritual experience at Towns Hospital in December of 1934 changed him in such a way that he was never again documented as ever saying an abusive word toward anyone up until his death.



In a November 14, 1951, letter to a member Bill W. wrote: "Respecting obscenity or profanity at AA meetings, I most ardently hold with all you say. It revolts me quite as much as it does you. And I make no doubt that would go for 99% of us, too. Most off such speakers eventually get policed. It is probably on A.A. that we carry the principle of tolerance over into license at times. Because there is no personal authority whatever among us, strange to say, all members are pretty reluctant to place a ban on [illegible] of anyone. This is true, even in still graver offenses."

In November of 1966, Bill W. wrote to an A.A. member from Michigan who asked the question "How do you stop some speakers from swearing at meetings, or do you just go ahead and let them swear?" Bill W. replied: "You raise the question of swearing from the platform at open meetings. At one time or another many perfectly good A.A.'s fall into this way of trying to be impressive. I have, in earlier years, been reminded by my friends that I shouldn't do this either. It is a rather silly business, and it is offensive to A.A.'s and especially to friends of A.A. who visit meetings. Of course, this is a well-known fact. Now when it comes to writing letters of protest to stop this sort of thing—well, I'm afraid I shouldn't do that. It is my experience that when I intervene in what is a local situation, it only makes matters worse. Why can't people on the Committee quietly buttonhole the people involved? A good-natured reminder should be enough."

# THINGS THAT HAPPEN WHEN YOU STOP EATING SUGAR

Submitted by Ron T. (Homegroup: Grace Point)

## You Become More Mentally Sharp

A study published in *Nutritional Neuroscience* explains how a high-fructose diet causes hippocampal insulin resistance while also exacerbating memory deficits.

## Your Risk of Diabetes Decreases

Eating a lot of sugar spikes blood sugar levels. Over time, high blood sugar levels can cause insulin resistance, which wreaks havoc on your liver, your pancreas, and other organs.

## You Lose Weight

Sugar consumption messes with the hormones responsible for maintaining a healthy weight. Sugar also impacts the part of your brain that controls appetite.

## You Feel Lighter, Brighter, and Happier

A study published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* found that eating sugary foods increased the risk for depression.

## Your Skin Will Glow

A study published in *Clinical, Cosmetic and Investigative Dermatology* shows how much more prone you are to have acne and other skin conditions when you feed your body too much sugar.

## You Won't Get Sick as Often

The chronic inflammation linked to high sugar consumption lowers your immune response, making you more susceptible to colds and flu throughout the year.

## You Age Slower

Consuming a diet high in sugar makes your skin wrinkle faster. The reason for this is glycation, a process that happens when sugar undermines the collagen and elastin production in your skin.

## You Have Better Breath

Sugar causes the bacteria in your mouth that is responsible for bad breath. When you consider this, your sweet tooth isn't so sweet — especially not for your honey.

## You Have Healthier Teeth

A study published in *Dentistry* explains how sugar is linked to cavities and tooth decay. To preserve your teeth and prevent bigger problems like root canals, stop consuming sugar.

## Your Sex Life Will Get a Boost

For women, sugar disrupts the sexual hormonal balance. For men, eating too much sugar can lead to erectile dysfunction and low libido due to the insulin spike after consuming sugar.

## You'll Sleep Better

Eating too much sugar in the evening can even cause night sweats. When you stop consuming sugar, your hormones function better, including the hormones responsible for sleep.

## HIGH EFFECTIVENESS OF 12 STEP PROGRAMS

Below is a summary of a research study that examined the effectiveness of attending 12 Step recovery meetings. Google “high effectiveness of self-help programs after addiction therapy” to find the full article.

### Background

The self-help groups Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA) are well established. AA and NA employ a 12-Step program and are found in most large cities around the world. Although many have argued that these organizations are valuable, substantial scepticism remains as to whether they are actually effective. Few treatment facilities give clear recommendations to facilitate client participation, and the use of these groups has been disputed. The purpose of this study was to examine whether the use of AA and NA self-help groups after addiction treatment is associated with higher rates of abstinence.

### Methods

One hundred and fourteen patients, 59 with alcohol dependency and 55 with multiple drug dependency, who started in self-help groups after addiction treatment, were examined two years after treatment was complete.

### Results

38% of those surveyed still participated in 12-Step self-help programs two years after addiction treatment completion. Among the regular participants, 81% had been abstinent over the previous 6 months, compared with only 26% of those who did not attend 12-Step recovery meetings. *The odds for a drug-free state were 12.6 times higher for those who participated regularly in AA and NA self-help groups than for those who did not.*

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Below is a segment of a summary of research on the effectiveness of 12 Step recovery meetings. Google “recovery-oriented mutual self-help groups” to find the full article.

Research evidence supports the efficacy of recovery-oriented mutual self-help groups, especially 12-Step programs. Participation in mutual self-help groups such as AA can improve outcomes. Both the frequency of meeting attendance and the level and duration of involvement in 12-Step activities, especially during the earlier stages of recovery, have been linked to better recovery outcomes, especially abstinence.

### One-Year Abstinence Rates by Meeting Frequency

AA Meeting Frequency	Abstinence Rates
Non-attenders	21.4%
2 - 4 meetings/week	42.7%
5+ meetings/week	61.1%



## WE ARE NOT A GLUM LOT



An old ex-druggie is visiting his doctor. After a life of drinking and drugging, it's taken a toll on his health.

"Well, Mr. Barton, you made it to 85, but I'm afraid I have bad news."

"Tell it to me straight doc. I survived the booze and the cocaine; I can take it."

"Your pancreas and kidneys are shot. Worse, you've got liver cancer. And the tests show early onset Alzheimer's."

"Geez, doc... Alzheimer's — that's the one that affects your memory, right?"

"I'm afraid so."

Well, at least I don't have cancer."



# February 2024 South Edmonton Fellowship Centre

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				<b>1</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7:00 AM Sunrise (AA)</li> <li>12:00 PM Fellowship Nooner (AA)</li> <li>2:30 Overeaters Anonymous</li> <li>6:00 PM Dinner with Bill (AA)</li> </ul>	<b>2</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7:00 AM Sunrise (AA)</li> <li>12:00 PM Fellowship Nooner (AA)</li> <li>7:00 Seeking Serenity by Candlelight (AA)</li> </ul>	<b>3</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10:30 AM Fellowship Breakfast Group (AA)</li> <li>12:00 PM Fellowship Nooner (AA)</li> <li>2:00 PM Gamblers Anonymous</li> <li>7:00 PM Sex Addicts Anonymous</li> </ul>
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