

Fellowship Centre Newsletter: September 2024



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Message from the President

Hello and welcome to the September 2024 Fellowship Newsletter. All goes extremely well for the Fellowship Centre as we reach four years since we were registered as a non-profit society in the Province of Alberta. The Centre currently hosts 26 weekly Twelve Step recovery meetings with space for more meetings. Operational policy mandates that generally only mutual support recovery groups can operate at the Centre and the person responsible for the meeting must have at least two years of continuous sobriety. If you would like to open a meeting at the Centre, please contact me to book your weekly meeting time and to ensure that you adhere to policy requirements.

The **Sunrise Meetings** are Alcoholics Anonymous meetings held at the Centre at 7:00 AM Monday through Friday. In March 2023 the meetings were offered from Tuesday to Friday. In August 2023 a trusted servant assumed responsibility for opening the Monday meeting so that an early morning every-workday meeting could be offered to early risers and those on their way to work. Congratulations to the Sunrise Meetings who are now registered with AA Central Office in New York. To clarify that all five meetings form one group, the five meetings are now collectively called the **Workday Sunrise Group**.

I have received a several concerning reports about individuals sharing during meetings that cause discomfort for some of those attending. A few things to keep in mind. The chairperson of the meeting is ultimately responsible for ensuring that people are not saying things that have nothing to do with recovery and that may be offensive to others. Please support the chairperson as they try to ensure that we are carrying the message of recovery. Also, it does happen that people who drank and used together end up in the same meetings, sometimes bringing hard feelings and past conflicts with them. Please keep in mind that individuals in recovery can be harboring a lot of resentments, character defects, and, in some cases, mental illness. If you notice people at a meeting who make you uncomfortable, please consider surrounding yourself with people in the meeting who support you. Remind yourself that not everyone is working a program as effectively as you. While your feelings are valid, you are not responsible for the past or present behaviour of others. We are only responsible for our side of the street.

Wishing you a happy and sober transition from summer to autumn,

Wayne W., President (780-394-0121)

South Edmonton Fellowship Centre



Thank You from the Fellowship Library

Thank you to all those who have and continue to contribute to the Fellowship Library. A particular thank you to the Providence Sunday Morning Group who donated many recovery books, Grapevines, cassettes, and CDs. Library holdings are increasing, and this is another way to carry the message of recovery. More donations are always needed. If you would like to borrow from the Library, simply take a book or CD and return it when you are finished. Recent Library donations include the following books and CDs:

1. The Best of Bill: Reflections on Faith, Fear, Honesty, Humility, and Love (Large Print)
 2. Overcoming Shock: Healing the Traumatized Mind and Heart (by Zimberoff & Hartman)
 3. How Al-Anon Works for Families and Friends of Alcoholics
 4. The Changing Face Drinking: Substance, Imagery, and Behaviour
 5. Sobriety Without End (by Father John Doe)
 6. The Recovery Book (by Mooney, Eisenberg & Eisenberg)
 7. A Spiritual Principle a Day (Narcotics Anonymous)
 8. Courage to Change (Al-Anon)
 9. A.A. for the Older Alcoholic: Never Too Late (Large Print)
 10. The Oxford Group Bill W. CD
 11. Personal Stories from the Big Book CD
 12. Bill W. The Day Dr Bob Died CD
 13. Language of the Heart: Bill W.'s Grapevine Writings CD
 14. Mildred F. A.A. from Toronto CD
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Thank You for the Anonymous Gifts



You may have heard many times in recovery that “we are to do good tasks without advertising it, so that we might not get the recognition our ego craves.” Such humility and generosity are frequently apparent in those who anonymously donate to the South Edmonton Fellowship Centre. You may have noticed the bench that has appeared in front of the Centre. This bench is very much appreciated by people who can sit down while they are having a cigarette or while they are visiting with each other before and after meetings. Thank you also, to one of our more artistic



members who labelled the bench to insure that no one would inadvertently remove it from the Centre.

As recently appeared as the Grapevine Quote of the Day: *Many ask, “what is anonymity?” and “what is humility?” To me, they are almost the same thing. They are devoid of prestige; they demand nothing; they don’t ask to be right; they simply suggest that the icy egocentric elements in all of us retire into the background, and that we wear the warm cloak of anonymity and humility, and therefore, spirituality.* (California, March 2000, Voices of Long-Term Sobriety)

The 12-Step Program Advantage

Those of us working a 12-Step Program of recovery have an advantage over normal folks. Here are two stories to demonstrate this.

I was talking with a non-recovery business acquaintance. He complained about a recent conversation that had not gone well. While talking with another fellow, he made a minor criticism, and the other man exploded in rage.

I paused, unconsciously framing the problem within 12-Step Program parameters. I replied, “It sounds like fear was dominating him, and he lashed out. Eventually, you’ll have to forgive him.”

My acquaintance looked at me like I was an idiot. “Where would you get that idea? Forgive him, no way, he’s just an asshole, and I’ll never deal with him again.” My acquaintance lost a valuable business connection.

Another example: a recovery friend tells the story of a luncheon with a business associate. Over lunch, his associate complained bitterly about his staff, clients, and everything else in the world. My recovery friend, forgetting he was talking with a Normie, said, “When I get into an angry frame of mind, where nothing seems to be working out the way I want, I have to take stock, do a personal inventory.”

His non-recovery friend looked at him like he had a third eye, and dismissed him with a “Yeah, whatever.” At last report, his business associate was still suffering.

We have a 12-Step Program advantage; we can deal with things that used to baffle us, and these things that baffle us are no different than the things that confuse many of the Normies around us. But we have an advantage, we have tools, we have spent a lot of time working on ourselves. Moreover, we have listened to shares in the rooms and have had conversations with others in recovery. They have taught us many do’s and don’ts of life. We have observed many examples of solutions, both good and bad.

We are compelled to practice these principles in all our affairs ... or we die.

This 12-Step Program advantage becomes more apparent in a crisis; we know what to do. We have a playbook, Steps we can follow. We have Program friends we can lean on. We can meditate more, pray more, and keep in touch more.

Acquiring this 12-Step Program advantage was not easy. We have faced demons, fears, and dependencies. But as a result, we have greater self-awareness and control. And some of us have been blessed with confidence in the universe that transcends faith.

In difficult times, we can demonstrate victory over our troubles, so that others can see the strength of the 12-Step way of life.

Andy C. from Calgary: sober since November 3rd, 1977 (adapted from Still More Gems)

Journey to My Own Seventh Step Prayer

It has now been over six months since alcohol was part of my life. I was desperate, I was in despair, my health.... life in ruins. I admitted to myself, I was powerless over alcohol, my life was unmanageable. My journey began.

I had tried many things, will-power, selective drinking, certain time drinking, limited number of drinks, not drinking when out with friends, therapy, and many other attempts to “drink like other people.” But in the end, I am an alcoholic. I spent a day before Christmas in hospital, six weeks following an alcohol-free period, and when all my tests result confirmed my health, I celebrated with what I hope was my last bender, a weeklong one. I must have polished off more 40’s than a person like me could handle. I was like a starving hyena in the middle of an endless desert. I would surely be dead if it wasn’t for A.A.

I was always afraid of A.A. It was all about God and maybe even a cult. I knew I needed help, and A.A. was my last resort. I was an atheist. Probably spent less than one hour in church in my life and I assumed that A.A. was there to convert me to some kind of religion. Initially the God word annoyed me but going to one to three meetings a day in my first few months of sobriety, I grew to ignore it and replace the word God with acronyms. “Goodness on Dale” was in the back of my mind every time I spoke it. Even the serenity prayer bothered me as it was too God. I was ignorant and naive.

I struggled on and it was suggested by many to pray. I had difficulty. It wasn’t right for me. I didn’t do it, nor could I understand the concept. Pray to whom? I’m an atheist. Higher power? I create my own power, and I create my destiny was always in the back of my mind. But unexplainably things started happening to me, odd things, positive things. Co-incidences that baffled my logical mind. My health was improving, my mind was improving, my life was improving. It suddenly hit me one day. Nothing had changed in my life, but me. With all these positives coming into my life, I doubled down and pushed the program further.

God resurfaced again in the Third Step prayer on page 63 of the Big Book.

God, I offer myself to Thee – to build with me and do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy Love and Thy Way of Life. May I do Thy will always!”

Bluntly, this was not for me. I read it grudgingly with my sponsor, I was uncomfortable, I resented it. This reminded me of organized religion of which I want no part. My sponsor could see this would be a stumbling block, one that I may not get past. Even writing it (as above) brought up negative emotions. This would not work for me. My Sponsor hinted at this time that I might adjust the words but maintain the basic intent of the prayer, and even helped by writing a few words down. I am grateful.

But I moved on. The program was working, I knew that. My journey had to continue. I was committed to and willing go to any length to have “what we have.” I muddled forward, attending

to 5-7 meetings per week plus weekly time with my sponsor. I engulfed myself in wisdom, knowledge, readings, journalling, experience, caring, but most of all sharing and daily reflecting on my journey. I was becoming more spiritual, and in my mind, I replaced the word God with the Twelve Spiritual Principles. I could believe in these Principles, I can execute the Principles, I can become aware of when I am not following the Principles, I can adjust when I sway from the Principles, I can live by the Principles.

But that God word resurfaced. This time in the Seventh Step prayer on page 76 of the Big Book.

My Creator, I am now willing that You should have all of me, good and bad. I pray that You now remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows. Grant me strength, as I go out from here, to do Your bidding.

This program had not led me astray thus far. A.A. dealt me two aces and it was up to me to split them and go for it. I was at a point where I saw everything in my life differently. My self-pity, fear, and anxiety were washing away. The Principles I executed in my life were creating a different person, a better person, a caring person, a spiritual person. My journey was not over. I knew I had to succumb. I had to pray and let go of my preconceptions. But I had to do it my way. This is my personalized Seventh Step prayer:

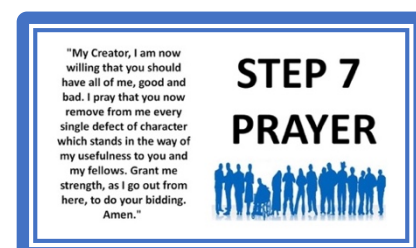
Spiritual Principles guide my Life. God give me the strength to replace my defects of character including my need for acceptance, my fears, my social anxiety, my need for control and my ego with the Principles. Give me patience, humility, courage and awareness. With your will I welcome and accept a new happiness, a new freedom and a new experience in life. Today, with your will and guidance I choose to be vulnerable and to accept and love myself.

My prayer is meaningful to me. My prayer provides me with an inner peace. My prayer provides me strength. My prayer is honest to myself. My prayer will guide me into Step Eight. My prayer is a critical part of my recovery journey.

I have always been fond of the saying “the more I learn, the more I realize how much I don’t know” by Albert Einstein. This is true about A.A. for me. Every time I put more into the program, the more I receive back.

I am but beginning my journey. With Gods will, my journey will be fruitful, filled with opportunities to carry this message to those who still suffer and to practice the Principles in all my affairs. I am not the person I used to be, and for that I am grateful.

Dale P. (Sunrise Group)



The Ripple Effect: Using Step Ten to Work Step Six and Seven Every Day

The serenity prayer is one of the programs most concentrated source of inspiration and guidance. It is also one of the most beloved and often quoted. Here is the most common version:

*God grant me the serenity
To accept the things I cannot change;
The Courage to change the things I can;
And the wisdom to know the difference.*

This version of the prayer sets up a duality: the things we can change and the things we cannot. But these are not our only two options.

In Step One, we admitted that our addiction was not something we could cure, or manage, or otherwise change for the better. Then, in Step Two we admitted that we could not become saner or more spiritual on our own. We also understood that as we worked Steps Three through Nine, especially Steps Six and Seven, we would have a spiritual experience, and a transformation would occur. But we also understood that we could not make these things happen. ***They would happen to us.***

In recovery, we come to understand that it is harmful and self-defeating to try to control and manipulate the world. Recovery is about showing up, speaking, and acting in a way that, somehow, sets the stage for positive change, often in ways we cannot plan or predict.

Here is another version of the serenity prayer that captures this approach:

*God grant me the serenity
To accept the things I cannot change;
The courage to change the things I can;
And the wisdom to also do the things I can
That will bring about the changes I cannot.*

When we live Steps Six and Seven, we understand that it is not possible for us, on our own, to get rid of our shortcomings and character defects. Our Higher Power must do that for us.

Yet in order to work those Steps – and for them to work on and through us – we have to act, by asking our Higher Power to remove these flaws. We have to ask for the necessary events to ripple through us. We have to make a wilful commitment to no longer do the things the way we used to – and an equally wilful commitment to accept whatever happens next. This altered serenity prayer beautifully embodies this same process and attitude. (Adapted from pages 90-91)

Fundraising and the Traditions

(adapter from <https://bigbooksponsorship.org/articles-alcoholism-addiction-12-step-program-recovery/twelve-traditions-group-conscience-mob-rule/activity-fundraising-conflicts-tradition/>)

My experience is that one must distinguish between generating funds internally from within the fellowship and generating funds from outside. The spirit of Tradition Seven is declining outside contributions (businesses and non-members) but generating funds from within.

Were it not for “fundraising,” no group would exist. Passing the basket is one way a group (hopefully via Group Conscience vote) raises funds. Where is it dictated or etched in stone that passing a basket is the only way (my way or highway) that a group is “allowed” to generate funds?

I like to put things in context and look at the other traditions. It is not a black and white thing. One could make a case that generating funds (if a group respects Tradition Four) indirectly keeps the primary purpose going for Tradition Five and Twelve Step work. Take a meeting that is supported by mostly sober homegroup people and/or newcomers. Many may be unemployed but if the group is able to put on a function for fellowship members so that the recovered members can continue to carry the message to many new people, who am I to say that is a bad thing if: the members voted (Tradition Two) so they are unified (Traditions One) on their ability to carry the message (Tradition Five).

Most groups do not accumulate funds beyond a prudent reserve. That is a good but moot point. I personally know that most groups spend their money or donate it. Some may choose to hold on to the funds but although I may not like that idea, Tradition Two trumps my opinion or thoughts.

Some groups put on functions such as dinner and speakers. That is my experience not my opinion. Many are eager to show others that we can have fun in recovery. Although the Big Book is our solution, if I am a Big Book quoting robot with no fun or zest for life then why did I come into recovery? At these functions, we have usually picked some pretty good speakers so, if done properly, it is great way to show the newcomer our program (Tradition Five). But these functions cost money and some may raise money for the function -- all in the name of the primary purpose, -- not to hurt it.

I try not to be so narrow minded and forget that if it were not for funds raised, the book Alcoholics Anonymous would never have been printed. Yes, I know that the traditions were not in effect then. But each fundraiser is a case-by-case situation to be weighed by group members not one member’s broadly based “one size fits all and you have to do it my way” (self-centered) mentality.

It is kind of like the Big Book. I know many who can quote the Big Book and I even know a few of them who are still sober. Recovery is about living the program in the Big Book and showing others that we live productive lives. Part of a productive life is that we carry the message no matter what. Reality is that it requires funds. (Steve M. 2018)

Ninth Month; Ninth Step

Made direct amends to such people whenever possible, except went to do so would injury them or others.

Step Nine comes with a set of beautiful promises, but perhaps we have also heard about the Step Nine funk that is not written about in the Big Book. Though many in recovery have experienced it, not all of us have, and not all of us will. So, let's separate some fact from fiction.

What is the Step Nine Funk?

The Step Nine funk or lull is not a mandatory part of recovery. In fact, it is highly avoidable. It became something that people in recovery warn each other about because plenty of people go through it, but we don't need to. This lull happens after we get off the "pink cloud" honeymoon phase of early sobriety.

Typically, we have worked all previous eight Steps, and we are feeling great. Life is changing. We are changing, and things are mostly going well. We are clean/sober and recovering and feeling wonderful! Our sponsor helps us complete our Step Eight, but we are feeling so good that we get a little nervous to begin making amends and working Step Nine. We are hesitant or afraid to face the people we have harmed. After all, we are feeling good, and we do not want to jeopardize that. So, we put off our Ninth Step for a little bit. No big deal, right?

Maybe, but maybe not. This is usually when the funk starts to settle in. We have paused our 12-Step work, but we still have lots of unfinished business. We may feel great when we put things on pause, but stopping the process even briefly tends to slow us down enough that negative energy catches up with us. We have things to do that we are tentative about, making stopping and sitting in this spot a risky business. The forward momentum of working the 12-Steps kept us feeling good, and stopping suddenly tends to have consequences. Luckily, we can pull out of this funk or avoid it altogether relatively easily.

How to Fight the Funk

We cease fighting everything and everyone in recovery, but we can avoid the negative feelings of the Step Nine funk by taking action. Better yet, we can go even further and make sure that we never let up. It is easier to keep going than to get started again. This is true for most things in life, but especially for recovery. The 12-Steps go in order, so we should not be surprised when the Ninth Step approaches. We can see it coming. When we are in this position, we should take care not to stop or slow down as the Ninth Step approaches.

If we do not let our momentum lag, we can likely avoid any slumps. It's hard to face things that we are afraid of, but we do not do anything alone in recovery. We have our recovery community and our sponsor to guide us through each of the 12-Steps. The best prevention is to take full advantage of this support system and keep ourselves moving along in our 12-Step recovery process. Both the Big Book and the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions offer many warnings about not keeping up our momentum or delaying the 12-Step process out of fear or trepidation. Read these books for more useful information and tips.

Believe in the Ninth Step Promises

The Ninth Step promises are beautiful. They promise us wonderful things, both as a result of working the 12-Steps and specifically as a result of diligent Ninth Step work. In the chapter of the Big Book titled "Into Action," we can read these incredible promises for ourselves. Suffice it to say that we are promised that we will be amazed before we are even halfway through the process. We are promised things like freedom, happiness, and the removal of regret. We will know peace; our pains and experience will benefit other people. As we serve them and make amends, we will find usefulness. We will lose our selfishness and fear. And this is just the beginning! What are we waiting for?

(Adapted from <https://www.jaywalkerlodge.com/9th-step-promises-and-the-9th-step-funk/>)

We Are Not a Glum Lot

Robert Provine describes the contagious nature of laughing in his book, Laughter: A Scientific Investigation. He believes laughter is evidence of social neuroscience—that we share the impulse to laugh with others on a deep biological level because we need a connection between us. The world of positive psychology, for example, has found in research that one’s sense of humor has many valuable social functions. It helps us create social bonds and to interact more smoothly as others respond positively to us. Consequently, we have less stress, find greater meaning in life, and experience less loneliness and isolation.

For people in addiction recovery, all these benefits of humor are key elements in a good recovery plan: healing the brain after toxicity, enhancing our genuine connections with others, and finding meaning in everyday life. Enjoy and share the following recovery humor!

How many addicts does it take to screw in a light bulb?
One: the addict holds the bulb, and the world revolves around them!

An alcoholic is driving home from the bar at 3 AM inebriated. He is swerving between lanes and gets spotted by a patrol officer who then pulls him over. The cop asks the inebriated man where he’s headed at such a late hour. The drunk replies “I’m just going to a lecture, officer.” In disbelief the officer asks, “Who would be giving a lecture this late?”

The alcoholic replies, “My wife.”



How can you tell that you are at an Al-Anon meeting?
Someone spills their coffee and everyone gets up to clean it up.

“All right, let’s not panic: I’ll make the money back by selling one of my livers. I can get by with one.” Homer Simpson

How many Al-Anons does it take to screw in a lightbulb? None. They just detach and let it screw itself.

When you finally sober up and get clean.



September 2024 South Edmonton Fellowship Centre

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10:30 AM Girlfriend Hour (AA Women) 12:00 PM Fellowship Nooner (AA) 2:00 Sunday Afternoon Meditation Group (AA) 6:00 PM Sunday Night Step Group (CA) 	2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7:00 AM Sunrise Group (AA) 12:00 PM Fellowship Nooner (AA) 6:30 PM Our Basic Text (AA) 8:00 PM Awakenings Men's Meeting (AA) 	3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7:00 AM Sunrise Group (AA) 10:30 AM Sunshine (AA) 12:00 PM Fellowship Nooner (AA) 7:00 PM ISMs (AA) 	4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7:00 AM Sunrise Group (AA) 12:00 PM Fellowship Nooner (AA) 7:00 PM There is a Solution (CA) 	5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7:00 AM Sunrise Group (AA) 12:00 PM Fellowship Nooner (AA) 2:30 PM Overeaters Anonymous 6:30 PM Steps We Took (AA) 	6 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7:00 AM Sunrise Group (AA) 12:00 PM Fellowship Nooner (AA) 7:00 PM Serenity by Candlelight (AA) 	7 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10:00 AM Fellowship Breakfast Group (AA) 12:00 PM Fellowship Nooner (AA) 2:00 PM Gamblers Anonymous 7:00 PM Sex Addicts Anonymous
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