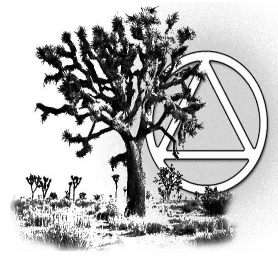


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I Am Responsible

When anyone, anywhere, Reaches out for help,
I want the hand of A.A. to always be there. And for that: I am responsible.

Charlie Brown

I first met Charlie Brown at the Round Table Discussion on Thursday night in June of 1987, in my sixth year of recovery. She had a “bounce in her spirit” about her, and I liked her approach thru life and the Twelve Step recovery program as outlined in the Big Book. I saw her at many meetings and she parroted the same things that I heard others whose recovery I admired. I guess I liked her more than I believed at the time. She always said that she had never heard of any one getting drunk from going to TOO MANY meetings, but the graveyard was full of those who went to TOO FEW. As with all humans, Charlotte did some things that would make a head shrink tend to watch with anticipation. For example, the halfway house for women she tried, and did start, that was open less than a year, if I recall correctly. She had more faith in that than a Bishop does in Jesus. But its failure did not mean that Charlotte was a failure and as one who had reached maturity without a drink, she picked up the pieces and moved on.

I remember one thing about her that really stands out. She had almost been killed in a horrible car-truck collision. One day I decided to take some lunch hour time and visit her. I went to her room up at hospital hill and knocked and then walked in. She was alone and really in bad shape. She looked at me and said, “What are you doing here?” with the emphasis in her voice on “YOU.” I said, “Friends visit friends in the hospital,” and I quoted that passage from the Gospel of Matthew, wherein Jesus was telling his disciples about how to get into heaven. He said, “Those who fed me when I was of hunger, those who clothed me when I was naked, those who . . . are they who will be in heaven.” When the crowd said, “Master we did not know you when you were hungry . . .,” but Jesus replied, “Those who did this for the least of my brethren did so to me.” Charlotte simply said, “I guess sometimes people are friends and do not know it.”

(Continued on page 2)

Amends

When describing Step Nine in the Big Book it says that “if we are painstaking about this phase of our development we will be amazed before we are halfway through,” (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, pgs. 83-84), and then it goes on to list the promises. The information in the 12 X 12 is a lot more direct about the different approaches we could take and tries to encourage us to exercise caution before we rush in and make some major blunders. This suggestion, I think, can’t be taken lightly. I have heard many horror stories about well meaning people, wanting to put this Step behind them, ran to their friends and loved ones and disclosed things that destroyed any trust they may have had in the alcoholic.

“Good judgment, a careful sense of timing, courage, and prudence—these are the qualities we shall need when we take Step Nine.” (*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, p. 83) Sometimes we read the **headline** but fail to read the **entire article**. If we do this when we go through the Steps, we can do more damage to our already strained relationships. Making promises, to my close friends and family, that I’m not sure I can keep, usually fall on deaf ears. [But] an honest recognition of my past mistakes, without going into too many details at this time, and a sincere determination to give the program my best effort with the understanding that my behavior will be the measure of my success, is a more acceptable approach. We know that the road to hell is paved with good intentions. After we have put some time between us and our last debacles, we can revisit those amends and go into details about each event, only after we have run it by an experienced and trusted advisor.

Rushing into an amend that could bring hardship to our unsuspecting family, or to other third parties, is another mistake that people sometimes make. In Step Nine in the 12 X 12 it says that “*WE cannot, for example, unload a detailed account of extra-marital adventuring upon the shoulders of our unsuspecting wife or husband.*” (*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, p. 86) I would also include major financial or work related amends that may result in losing your job, or create heavy financial difficul-

(Continued on page 2)

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She and I and some others helped to teach an A.A. how to read at a Saturday morning Big Book Study in Victorville, the Tumbleweed Group. She was never one to be shy in helping others, and I found her humility one of her strong characteristics. She is one of my heroes for taking care of her mother for so long, even though she did not particularly want to or even liked doing it. It helped me forgive my father who I had grown up hating.

Charlotte was a fallible human as we all are. She talked to me about a lady recovering who tended to whine and moan more than what was good for her and Charlotte, in a very catty way said to me, "I cannot for the life of me understand her. She has a dog, a car, a job, and a boyfriend. What has she to complain about?" I laughed so hard, Charlotte thought I was crazy. When Rosie died, I remember what Charlotte said, "Rosie used to always say we should NEVER forget our A, B, Cs," in reference to the Big Book: (a) That we were alcoholic and could not manage our own lives; (b) That probably no human power could have relieved our alcoholism, and (c) That GOD could and would IF He were sought." I had heard Rosie iterate that at many meetings, but after Charlotte reminded us of it, I never forgot it and constantly say it at meetings my own self.

We lost a real neat old timer a day after Thanksgiving named Glen Shriner. He and I attached ourselves to each other as only two lifetime shooters can. In his final months I reloaded his cartridges for him, because he had the shakes so badly. He said one time that he would have liked to have met Charlotte. Since they died so closely, they may have been on the same carryall going to A.A. heaven. I KNOW they met each other. RIP old timers.

Submitted by,

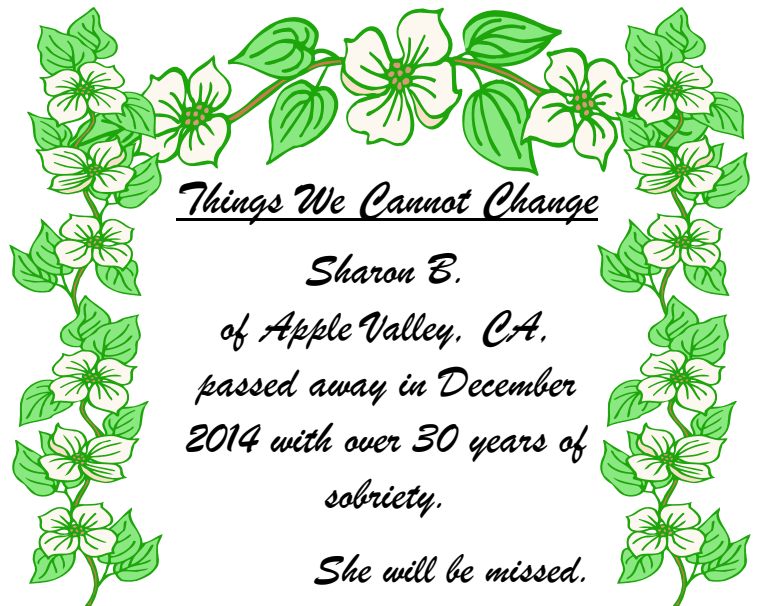
Jim Lehmann, Lander, WY

Amends

(Continued from page 1)

ties for the family. These should be put off until everyone involved is in agreement, and then, only after talking to someone to make sure that you are not overlooking anything.

How about all those relatives and friends that we haven't seen in a while, but still have an uncomfortable feeling about the way we left that relationship? These people only have a snapshot of what we used to be like. They don't see the day to day changes that we have made in our lives, and they assume that we are the same as when we made our last major mistake. For this type of situations, I would consider a slow but sincere process of reestablishing contact with those involved. I once suggested that, using the opportunity on birthdays and holidays, of sending cards can be a nice way to reestablish contact



Things We Cannot Change

*Sharon B.
of Apple Valley, CA,
passed away in December
2014 with over 30 years of
sobriety.*

She will be missed.

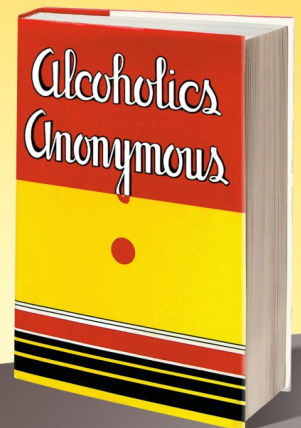
with these people, with a simple "Been thinking about you and hope things are going well for you. Love. . ." Sending these out at each opportunity for a year or two with **no return address** and no expectations and, at some time in the future, you will have to attend a wedding, graduation, or funeral, [you will see them again. You] will be amazed at what will happen. My experience has been that the cards create curiosity and *that* sometimes causes these people to talk to each other, and they find out that you are trying hard to mend your ways. [It] tends to disarm them. Now, that would be the time to put these things to rest. Keeping in mind that, if I can't add the kicker, "**I regret what I did, and I don't do that anymore**" then maybe I'm not ready to make that amend yet.

I hope these ideas will help you to understand that most amends can be made in a positive way, and the results are so much better than we ever could have expected. We must do these things if we hope to develop the **serenity and peace** that is **promised**.

Submitted by,

Rick R., Poway, CA

Just a reminder:
The First Edition
Big Book
Reproduction
is still available at
Central Office.
Once they're gone,
they're gone!



Life Can be Beautiful!

Things I have learned by attending meetings and practicing the principles of the A.A. Fellowship:

That if we want to get some of the good things out of life, we must put some good things into it; and that we really do not own anything until we begin to share it with others, and even then we are only partners in its ownership.

That to get more pleasure out of life and make it more interesting, we should set up at least one major goal for ourselves, that it will keep us busy working toward some end, instead of just living each day through without getting any satisfaction out of our work.

That it is dangerous for us to become boastful and claim victory for ourselves, because we are members of a fellowship, all of who are contributing some material to building a fortification against our weakness.

That we should practice the A.A. theory; that today is much more important than tomorrow. Today is ours, and even if we don't use it, it is ours. Out of today we are making our yesterdays and tomorrows. It is foolish to keep putting off until some future time the things we want to do for ourselves and others.

That we are travelers on life's highway, we travel from portal of birth to the portal of death; we can leave the highway strewn with wreckage of all kinds, or we can leave it strewn with kind and pleasant memories for those who will follow.

That the road toward peace and happiness sometimes runs through the valley of sorrow, disappointment and grief, but if we go straight and turn right, we will find the sunshine, peace and happiness that every person is looking for.

That we should set up a reasonable, instead of an impossible standard for ourselves, so that we will not be forever frustrated simply because we can't keep up with our neighbors; set our own pace and decide for ourselves what is important and what is not.

That we should start a hobby of collecting memories; but they can't be collected like old postage stamps; they are made by what we do for others. It is the imperishable wealth of memories that become the only food which sustains our lives, and we should feel sorry for the person without a rosary of memories. He has nothing to companion the soul on its journey toward the shining dawn.

That in living, as in fighting one advantage of altitude is security. If we are to keep our heads clear, our hearts clean, and our bodies sober, we must live above certain danger zones.

There is considerable security in high thinking. High thinking lifts us above the attacks of petty insult and slight resentments which magnify our moods. High thoughts give us security from the ravages of little worries which sap our energies and so often destroy our peace of mind.

That the best things are the nearest: the breath in our nostrils, the light in our eyes, the followers at our feet, duties at our hand, the path of God just before us. So let's not grasp for the stars, but do life's common work as it comes, certain that the daily duties and daily bread are the sweetest things in life.

That none of us can live well and happily by only an occasional good resolution.

That at the end of each day we should stop to remind ourselves of all the things we should be thankful for.

Ed B., original Editor of the IGNews
March 1958

AAisms for 2014

Dear Drunks (and two normies),

Some of you know that I write down everything I like that I hear during A.A. meetings. I call them "AAisms." I've shared these over the years with some of you, and others are being added to the list for the first time (let me know if this gives you a resentment. . .). I hope the nuggets of wisdom contained on the attached 11 pages bless you as much as they did me during 2014.

Thanks and Happy New Year!

Ed L., Wrightwood, CA

Editor's note: All 11 pages will be used throughout the year and, yes, please let Ed know if *he* gives any of you "a resentment!" Betty B.

"Great days don't just happen, you make them happen." ~Ed L. in notebook, Wrightwood, CA on 6 January 2014

"Don't be fooled by what you think." ~Ed L. to Phelan Good Morning Group, Phelan, CA on 6 January 2014

"Like the mighty oak starts out as an acorn, each debilitating fear starts out as a thought. How much easier to pluck out a single thought than to uproot a mighty fear-fed neurosis."
~Ed L. to Phelan Good Morning Group, Phelan, CA on 6

(Continued on page 4)

Upcoming Events

Intergroup meets the third Saturday of each month at Central Office at 9:30 a.m. Please have your Intergroup Reps. plan on attending.

January 24, 2015

4:30 p.m.—6:30 p.m., Movie Night at the Tumbleweed Group, 15307 7th St., Victorville. Popcorn, candy, and sodas will be available for sale.

April 10—11, 2015

Ride for Recover, from Barstow to Beatty, NV. More information will be forthcoming.

June 12—14, 2015

The High Desert Sunshine of the Spirit Convention will be held at the Ambassador Hotel in Victorville, CA. This is a new date for the convention so plan on attending and supporting it. More information will be available in the coming months.

(Continued from page 3)

January 2014

“Knowing that the ratio of what I think to what I know is 1,000:1; you would think I would stop thinking, but I know I won’t.” ~Ed L. to Phelan Good Morning Group, Phelan, CA on 8 January 2014

“Resist the urge to look fear-wardly at your life.” ~Tom Centric to Wednesday Night Men’s Stag, Wrightwood, CA on 8 January 2014

“If you don’t like the way I drive, get off the @#\$\$%^&* sidewalk!” ~Ole Rich to Nazarene Church meeting, Hesperia, CA on 9 January 2014

“So, Ed, what do you know?” “Well, Bob, not as much as I think!” ~Ed L. to Cedar Street Big Book Study, 9 January 2014

“I’ve been rocketed into the Fourth [*dementia*].” ~Actual typo in the Area 09 newsletter on 12 January 2014

“You don’t *have* gratitude; you *do* gratitude.” ~Ed L. to Phelan Good Morning Group, Phelan, CA on 17 January 2014

“Excessive thinking leads to ‘knowing,’ which is a barrier to wisdom.” ~Ed. L. at Long Beach Alano Club on 17 January 2014

“Some things, like honesty, are black and white; you either are or you aren’t.” ~Ed L. to Phelan Good Morning Group, Phelan, CA on 17 January 2014

“I had the hair of the dog so much that my dog was bald when I got here.” ~Ed L. to Joshua Tree Fellowship Hall, Joshua Tree, CA on 31 January 2014

Thought to Ponder

*Your perception will change your experience.
Your experience is your life.*

Central Office Activities

<u>OFFICE</u>	<u>DECEMBER</u>	<u>Y.T.D.</u>
Visitors	108	1,033
Info. Calls	169	2,412
12 Step Calls	1	13
<u>Call Forwarding</u>		
Info. Calls	93	1,080
12 Step Calls	1	19
<u>Totals</u>		
Info Calls	262	2,513
12 Step Calls	2	31

Faithful Fivers

Brain G.	\$50.00
Nixon	9.80
Jim L.	5.00
Bob	4.10

And Finally . . .

Two buddies, Paul and Steve, are getting very drunk at a bar when suddenly Steve throws up all over himself. “Oh, no! Now Jane will kill me!”

Paul says, “Don’t worry pal. Just tuck a twenty in your breast pocket, tell Jane that someone threw up on you and gave you twenty dollars for the dry cleaning bill.”

So they stay for another couple of hours and get even drunker. Eventually Steve rolls into home and his Jane starts to give him a bad time. “You reek of alcohol and you’ve puked all over yourself! My goodness, you’re disgusting!”

Speaking very carefully so as not to slur, Steve says, “Nowwainaminit, I can s’plain everyting! Itsh not wot you tink. I only had a couple a drinks. But this other guy got sick on me. He’d had one too many and he jus couldn’t hol his booze. He says he’s very sorry an gave me twenty bucks for the cleanin bill.”

Jane looks in the breast pocket and says, “But there’s forty bucks?”

“Oh, yeah. I amos forgot. He sh*t in my pants, too.”

Reprinted from the May 2001 *Newsletter for the Fellowship*