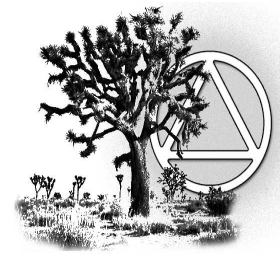


Victor Valley Intergroup, Central Office, Inc.  
18888 Highway 18, Suite 107  
Apple Valley, CA 92307  
Telephone: 760-242-9292; Email: vvigco\_aa@yahoo.com;  
Web site: www.victorvalleyaa.org



## 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.

### *Saving Grace*

**M**y eyes locked on the nearly empty bottle of brandy sitting on the night stand from the night before. It was Saturday morning and I was determined not to drink that day. So I got rid of the last bit of brandy by guzzling it down all at once. I walked into the bathroom and washed my face, brushed my teeth, and gargled away the last taste of that last drink. I gathered the empty bottles and beer cans and threw them in the trash out back. Downing that last little corner was the last drink I've had to this day.

Before that day I had been drinking alcohol non-stop since junior high school. The only time my body got a break from the booze is when I got busted for stealing it and went to jail. I always did everything to the extreme, and drinking alcohol was no exception. As the years went by it became apparent that I did not drink like other people. When it was time to stop drinking, I could not stop until I literally passed out. Not enough money and too much alcohol was always the root of my problems. Since I can remember, I have never been able to control my drinking.

When the sun went down on that very memorable Saturday, October 18, 2014, I knew I had gotten through my first day without a drink. I was confident that I wouldn't go out and buy a bottle that night. I was so thankful and grateful that I didn't drink that day. I had the shakes really bad and my stomach felt really sick. But I thanked God for seeing me through. I asked Him to please take away my desire for alcohol. I thanked Him for His saving grace.

As a way of answering my prayers, my higher power guided me to the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous. My previous attempts to stop drinking never included Alcoholics Anonymous. I always felt I could stop drinking on my own if I tried hard enough. But every time I managed to stop drinking, I always started back. I simply could not stay stopped. It is only by the saving grace of God that I am still sober today.

*(Continued on page 2)*

### *The Last Word*

*Words of Wisdom, May 1998*

**C**harlie W. hadn't achieved forty-six years of sobriety without developing a strong sense of the Steps and Traditions, and the intuitive thought described in our Promises. Jack, the newspaper editor in Charlie's hometown, had proved himself an enthusiastic—if uniformed—friend and admirer of A.A. He kept pressing Charlie to share his years of wisdom with readers through an interview—  
anonymously, of course.

Charlie continued to refuse the interview, contending he couldn't speak for A.A., or even for his group. But the editor continued to plead until, one day, Charlie relented. "Here," Charlie said, "is the wisdom I've gathered from forty-six years of active and sober participation in the program of Alcoholics Anonymous." And he leaned forward with great confidentiality: "Alcoholics Anonymous, Jack, is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength, and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism. . . ."

Jack's pen scribbled furiously on his notepad, "The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking."

The pen flew, "There are no dues or fees for A.A. membership, Jack; we are self-supporting through our own contributions."

Jack's jaw was going slack with the wisdom of this man. "You see, Jack, Alcoholics Anonymous is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization, or institution. It does not wish to engage in any controversy, neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose, Jack, is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.

Wow! Away ran Jack with his interview, and, meticulously

*(Continued on page 4)*

(Continued from page 1)

The last time I stopped drinking it took a three day trip to Las Vegas with my then girlfriend to bring my sober streak to a screeching stop. The only reason I went to Vegas in the first place was to satisfy my then girlfriend's desire to gamble. Otherwise I really didn't want to go. So being compelled to go was a perfect excuse to start drinking again. I had already relapsed in my mind in anticipation of the trip. There was no way I was going to turn down free drinks in a Las Vegas casino.

As a result of my insane thinking, my drinking became worse and more progressive than ever. My drinking was so out of control I became utterly depressed. Being utterly depressed made me drink more. I actually tried to drink myself to death back then to end my misery.

Crying out to God for help turned out to be my saving grace. Making the decision to stop drinking is the best decision I ever made. There was no solemn oaths; simply a sincere desire to stop drinking. My home group is the Hesperia Umbrella Group in Hesperia, California. My fellow H.U.G. members have helped me stay sober one day at a time. A.A. has taught me that there is a solution to my alcoholism.

For the first time I finally admitted that I am an alcoholic and that my life had become unmanageable. For the first time self-seeking has slipped away, and I now have interest in my fellows. For the first time I do not regret the past realize that my experience with alcohol can benefit others. For the first time the feeling of uselessness and self-pity has disappeared. For the first time I intuitively know how to handle situations that used to baffle me. For the first time I have a new attitude and a new outlook on life. For the first time I have a new freedom and a new happiness. For the first time, thanks to Alcoholics Anonymous, I realize that God is doing for me what I could not do for myself. (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, 2001, p. 83-4.)

Submitted by,

Bro. Dwight, Victorville, CA

## *The Principles of the Program*

Step Twelve says:

*"Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs."*

But what are "these principles"? the following is what I have found in studying the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous* (BB), along with the *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* (12&12), and *As Bill Sees It* (ABSI).

~Anonymous

**BB** p. xix—(principles for A.A. groups and A.A. as a whole = 12 Traditions) As we discovered the principles by which the individual

alcoholic could live, so we had to evolve principles which the A.A. groups and A.A. as a whole could survive and function effectively. It was thought that no alcoholic man or woman could be excluded from our Society; that our leaders might serve but not govern; that each group was to be autonomous and there was to be no fees or dues; our expenses were to be met by our own voluntary contributions. There was to be the least possible organization, even in our service centers. Our public relations were to be based upon attraction rather than promotion. It was decided that all members ought to be anonymous at the level of press, radio, TV, and films. And in no circumstances should we give endorsements, make alliances, or enter public controversies. This was the substance of A.A.'s Twelve Traditions.

**BB** p. 14-5—My friend had emphasized the absolute necessity of demonstrating these principles in all my affairs. Particularly was it imperative to work with others as he had worked with me. Faith without works was dead, he said. And how appallingly true for the alcoholic! For if an alcoholic failed to perfect and enlarge his spiritual life through work and self-sacrifice for others, he could not survive the certain trials and low spots ahead. If he did not work, he would surely drink again, and if he drank, he would surely die. Then faith would be dead indeed. With us it is just like that.

**BB** p. 42-3—(attitude of open mindedness) Then they outlined the spiritual answer and program of action which a hundred of them had followed successfully. Though I had been only a nominal churchman, their proposals were not, intellectually, hard to swallow. But the program of action, though entirely sensible, was pretty drastic. It meant I would have to throw several lifelong conceptions out of the window. That was not easy. But the moment I made up my mind to go through with the process, I had the curious feeling that my alcoholic condition was relieved, as in fact it proved to be.

Quite as important was the discovery that spiritual principles would solve all my problems. I have since been bought into a way of living infinitely more satisfying and, I hope, more useful than the life I lived before. My old manner of life was by no means a bad one, but I would not exchange its best moments for the worst I have now. I would not go back to it even if I could.

**BB** p. 47—We needed to ask ourselves but one short question. "Do I now believe, or am I even willing to believe, that there is a Power greater than myself?" As soon as a man can say that he does believe, or is willing to believe, we emphatically assure him that he is on his way. It has been repeatedly proven among us that this simple cornerstone, a wonderfully effective spiritual structure, can be built.

That was great news for us, for we had assumed we could not make use of spiritual principles unless we accepted many things on faith which seemed difficult to believe.

**BB** p. 60—Many of us exclaimed, "What an order! I can't go through with it." Do not be discouraged. No one among us has been able to maintain anything like perfect adherence to these principles. We are not saints. The point is, that we are willing to grow along spiritual lines. The principles we have set down are guides to progress. We claim spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection.

**BB** p. 79—Although these reparations take innumerable forms, there are some general principles which we find guiding. Reminding ourselves that we have decided to go to any lengths to find a spiritual experience, we ask that we be given strength and direction to do the right thing, no matter what the personal consequences may be. We may lose our position or reputation or face

jail, but we are willing. We have to be. We must not shirk at anything.

**BB p. 83**—Yes, there is a long period of reconstruction ahead. We must take the lead. A remorseful mumbling that we are sorry won't fill the bill at all. We ought to sit down with the family and frankly analyze the past as we now see it, being very careful not to criticize them. Their defects may be glaring, but the chances are that our own actions are partly responsible. So we clean house with the family, asking each morning in meditation that our Creator show us the way of patience, tolerance, kindness and love.

The spiritual life is not a theory. We have to live it. Unless ones family expresses a desire to live upon spiritual principles we think we ought not to urge them. We should not talk incessantly to them about spiritual matters. They will change in time. Our behavior will convince them more than our words.

**BB p. 87**—We usually conclude the period of meditation with a prayer that we be shown all through the day what our next step is to be, that we be given whatever we need to take care of such problems. We ask especially for freedom from self-will, and are careful to make no request for ourselves only. We may ask for ourselves, however, if others will be helped. We are careful never to pray for our own selfish ends. Many of us have wasted a lot of time doing that and it doesn't work. You can easily see why.

If circumstances warrant, we ask our wives or friends to join us in morning meditation. If we belong to a religious denomination which requires definite morning devotion, we attend to that also. If not members of religious bodies, we sometimes select and memorize a few set prayers which emphasize the principles we have been discussing. There are many helpful books also. Suggestions about these may be obtained from ones priest, minister, or rabbi. Be quick to see where religious people are right. Make use of what they offer.

**BB p. 98**—It is not the matter of giving that is in question, but when and how to give. That often makes the difference between failure and success. The minute we put our work on a service plane, the alcoholic commences to rely upon our assistance rather than upon God. He clamors for this or that, claiming he cannot master alcohol until his material needs are cared for. Nonsense. Some of us have taken very hard knocks to learn this truth: Job or no job—wife or no wife—we simply do not stop drinking so long as we place dependence upon other people ahead of dependence on God.

Burn the idea into the consciousness of every man that he can get well regardless of anyone. The only condition is that he trust in God and clean house.

**BB p. 125**—(avoid hurtful gossip) Another principle we observe carefully is that we do not relate intimate experiences of another person unless we are sure he would approve. We find it better, when possible, to stick to our own stories.

**BB p. 130**—(God conscious but feet on the ground) Those of us who have spent much time in the world of spiritual make-believe have eventually seen the childishness of it. This dream world has been replaced by a great sense of purpose, accompanied by a growing consciousness of the power of God in our lives. We have come to believe He would like us to keep our heads in the clouds with Him, but that our feet ought to be firmly planted on earth. That is where our Fellow travelers are, and that is where our work must be done. These are the realities for us. We have found nothing incompatible between a powerful spiritual experience and a life of sane and happy usefulness.

One more suggestion: Whether the family has spiritual convictions or not, they may do well to examine the principles by which the

alcoholic member is trying to live. They can hardly fail to approve these simple principles, though the head of the house still fails somewhat in practicing them.

**BB p. 570**—Most emphatically we wish to say that any alcoholic capable of honestly facing his problems in the light of our experience can recover, provided he does not close his mind to all spiritual concepts. He can only be defeated by an attitude of intolerance or belligerent denial. We find that no one need have difficulty with the spirituality of the program. Willingness, honesty and open mindedness are the essentials of recovery. But these are indispensable.

“There is a principle which is a bar against all information, which is proof against all arguments and which cannot fail to keep a man in everlasting ignorance—that principle is contempt prior to investigation.”

~Herbert Spencer

Submitted by,  
Ron M., Victorville, CA, via *Silkworth.net*

## Intergroup Minutes June 20, 2015

The meeting was called to order by Helen M. at 9:30 a.m. who led us in the Serenity Prayer. In attendance were Helen M., Doug H., Carl O., Maria B., Angela J., Craig B., and Betty B. Carl O. read the minutes of the last meeting. The minutes were accepted.

**Treasurer's Report:** Betty B. read the Treasurer's Report. As of May 31, 2015, there was a balance of \$18,187.62 in savings, \$7,124.01 in the C.D., and \$4,011.11 in checking. The total income for May was \$2,571.85. The total expenses for May were \$2,997.93 which gave us a net income before literature sales of -\$426.08. Literature sales were \$1,149.25 with purchases of \$191.90. This gave us a net income of \$531.27. the report was accepted.

**Office Manager's Report:** Craig B. gave the report. Central Office had 108 visitors in May and 142 information calls. There were two 12 Step calls. Call forwarding had 156 information calls and two 12 Step calls. The totals were 298 information calls and four 12 Step calls. Craig will be getting a report together regarding a computer and printer for the volunteers. He also wanted to say, “Thank you!” to Nick P., Jeff L., and Bill P. for repairing the doors and installing a security door after the break in last month.

**Young at Heart Committee:** Treasurer Angela I. reported they have \$260.00 in ticket sales so far for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Speaker Meeting, Barbeque, Barn Dance, etc. to be held at Silver Oak Stables in Apple Valley, VA. Flyers are available at Central Office, and Betty will send a special email to announce it. For information you can call Roxy at 413-695-9930. All proceeds will go to Central Office.

**Newsletter Report:** Betty B. reported that we are up to 38 hard copies being mailed out and 60 email subscriptions.

**The next Intergroup Meeting will be July 18, 2015 at 9:30 a.m. at Central Office.**

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carl O., Assoc. Member

## Honesty—The Poem

Life wasn't going well for me when I showed upon the scene,  
But I was ready for change, whatever that would mean.

The life I'd lead was scandalous; I think you get the gist,  
And to get rigorously honest, was the first think on my list.

When practicing this principle I was brutal from the start,  
But that sometimes caused reactions, and it wasn't very smart.

My wife asked me a question, while trying on some jeans,  
Did they make her look extended? Well, you know what I mean.

That put me in a quandary, and I knew I had to lie.  
If life has to be that rigorous, well, I guess I'm gonna die.

I told a friend about it and he said, "You got it right,  
*Kindness* trumps the *rigorous* clause, and you gotta keep it light."

He gave a definition and for our purpose, I believe,  
"Kind honesty is *devoid of all motives to deceive*."

It gives a little wiggle room, and I think God wouldn't mind,  
If self-righteousness takes a little hit, *if only to be kind*.

I've learned there are few absolutes, and my conscience is my guide,  
And I must put self-honest first, when *these things I must decide*.

Submitted by,  
Rick R., Poway, CA

## 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.**

**August 14—16, 2015  
12th Annual Mountain A.A. Conference, Big Bear City, CA. For more information call Christina Z. at 909-273-8561, or visit [www.MountainAAConderence.com](http://www.MountainAAConderence.com).**

**August 28—30, 2015  
2nd Annual Wrightwood Women's Sober Retreat, Lion's Camp at Teresita Pines. Contact Michelle at 760-680-8817, Susan at 760-646-1488, or Cyndi at 760-887-4527 for more information.**

**September 19, 2015  
H & I Roundup at Horsemen's Center in Apple Valley, CA. More information will be forthcoming.**

Last Word

(Continued from page 1)

guarding the anonymity of the old-timer, he ran the interview in full.

A.A. members read the story in belly-laughing admiration of the adroitness of the old-timer. The general public got a straight-from-the-book definition of what A.A. is and is not.

And Charlie W. sat back with a quiet prayer of gratitude that his group recited the A.A. Preamble from memory at the beginning of every meeting.

Ralph M., Heavener, OK

Via, *Voices of Long-term Sobriety*, p. 149

## And Finally . . .



## Beer Contains Female Hormones

Yes, that's right—FEMALE hormones!

Last month, Montreal University and scientists released the results of a recent analysis that revealed the presence of female hormones in beer. Men should take a concerned look at their beer consumption. The theory is that beer contains female hormones (hops contain Phytoestrogens) and that by drinking enough beer, men turn into women.

To test the theory, 100 men each drank eight schooners of beer within a one hour period. It was then observed that 100% of the test subjects, yes 100% of all these men:

1. Argued over nothing
2. Refused to apologize when obviously wrong
3. Gained weight
4. Talked excessively without making sense
5. Became overly emotional
6. Couldn't drive
7. Failed to think rationally
8. Had to sit while urinating.

No further testing was considered necessary.

Submitted by,

Bill P., Victorville, CA