

Some Signs of a Spiritual Awakening

Increased ability to let things happen rather than make them happen.

Frequent attacks of smiling.

Feelings of being connected with others and with nature.

Frequent overwhelming episodes of appreciation.

Tendency to think and act spontaneously rather than by fear based on past experience.

Unmistakable ability to enjoy each moment.

Loss of need to worry.

Loss of interest in conflict.

Loss of interest in interpreting the action of others.

Loss of interest in judging others.

Loss of interest in judging yourself.

Gaining the ability to love without expecting anything in return.

In This Issue...

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NOTICE TO OUR READERS

In this month's issue of the Recovery Times, the Contributions Summary is provided as a page insert within the newsletter. The editors are revamping the newsletter layout. Look for more "new looks" in the upcoming months.

Upcoming Events

April 25-27 22nd Annual Southern California
Hospitals & Institutions Convention
Marriott Hotel, Irvine, CA
Info: 562-402-6487 or 562-577-6476
www.geocities.com/sereneboy21/
discoverthehighinhandi

May 16-18 Tri State - 19th Annual Roundup
Laughlin, NV
Info: Call Debbie A. - 928-681-2217
www.tristate-roundup.com

June 19-22 Desert Pow Wow
Renaissance Esmeralda Resort
Indian Wells, CA
Info: Kathy O. - 909-674-3032
www.desertpowwow.com

Registration forms for the events above are at the
Intergroup Meeting OR at Central Office

SERVICE COMMITTEE SCHEDULE

Mar 17, 2003 **SFV H&I**
THIRD MONDAY
8PM Business Meeting
Get Acquainted Workshop, 7pm,
5657 Lindley Ave.

April 7, 2003 **G.S. Districts #11, 16, 17**
FIRST MONDAY
6pm, 637 S. Victory Blvd
Burbank

April 1, 2003 **G.S. Districts #2**
FIRST TUESDAY
6:30pm, 4011 Dunsmore,
La Crescenta

April 2, 2003 **G.S. District #1**
FIRST WEDNESDAY
6:30pm, 7552 Remmet,
Canoga Park

April 9, 2003 **SFV Board of Directors**
7pm, Central Office

April 12, 2003 **G.S. District #7**
SECONDSATURDAY
Agua Dulce Woman's Club
33201 Agua Dulce Cyn Rd
Sharon G. (661) 951-0372

April 14, 2003 **SFV Intergroup**
SECOND MONDAY
6:30 pm Orientation
7pm Business Meeting
Knights of Columbus Hall
14450 Valerio Street, Van Nuys

Service Opportunities Alcoholics Anonymous in the San Fernando Valley

PUBLIC INFORMATION COMMITTEE -

Provides information to the general public about what A.A. does and does not do. Needs young people and Spanish speaking A.A.'s for health fairs at shopping malls and to speak at various schools and businesses. Contact Central Office (818) 988-3001.

HOSPITAL AND INSTITUTIONS COMMITTEE - NOTE NEW LOCATION!!!

Carries the message of Alcoholics Anonymous into hospitals, prisons & treatment facilities to those who are unable to get out to meetings. Meets the 3rd Monday of the month 8:00 PM @ St. Innocent's Church, 5657 Lindley Ave, Tarzana, CA. Info: Sarah G. (818) 894-9921.

TREATMENT FACILITIES / CPC COMMITTEE -

Meets the last Sunday of the month 4-5:00 PM 6531 Laurel Cyn, North Hollywood. Contact: Jeri B. (818) 846 9115

SAN FERNANDO VALLEY INTERGROUP -

Elected Intergroup representatives maintain and develop policies for Central Office, and inform other IG Reps about Alkathons & fund raisers, etc. Meets second Monday, monthly, Knights of Columbus Hall, 14450 Valerio St., Van Nuys, CA. Contact: Central Office at 988-3001.

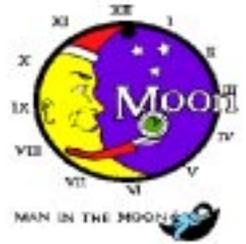
SAN FERNANDO VALLEY CONVENTION -

Planning and executing all phases of our annual convention, at the Burbank Hilton, Feb, 2004. Committee meets every 3rd Tuesday of each month; 7 PM at St. Innocent's Church, 5657 Lindley Ave, Tarzana, CA. First planning meeting April 15, 2003.



CENTRAL OFFICE

GUIDELINES FOR PUBLICATION OF ARTICLES



All articles published in the Recovery Times will be reviewed by a committee of three (3) members. Articles must therefore be received by the 10th of the month for consideration of publication in the following month's issue. Guidelines for publication are as follows:

- 1) No use of profanity.
- 2) Primary content must pertain to alcoholism, the recovery from the disease of alcoholism, the 12 Steps or the 12 Traditions.
- 3) The committee reserves the right to edit all articles submitted.

As stated in each issue of the Recovery Times: "RECOVERY TIMES presents the experience and opinions of members of A.A. (and occasionally others) on the subjects bearing on the disease of alcoholism. Opinions expressed herein are not to be attributed to Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole, nor does publication of any article imply endorsement of its content by the San Fernando Valley Central Office or Alcoholics Anonymous. Articles from A.A. World Services, Inc. (AAWS, Inc.) and the A.A. Grapevine, Inc. (as well as other publications) appearing herein are reprinted with permission. The names ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS and BIG BOOK are registered trademarks of AAWS, Inc."

Opposing views and rebuttals to articles published are also welcomed.

Submit correspondence to:

**SFVCO Newsletter Committee
7417 Van Nuys Blvd., Suite E
Van Nuys, CA 91405**

Your Birthday Gift to Central Office



Many A.A. members share their birthdays with those who need the same help and opportunity that A.A. gave to them.

By sending a donation to Central Office you share your birthday with Recovery Times readers. Send a dollar (\$1.00) a year - or \$1.00 for each year of your sobriety - or send as much as you wish to give to celebrate your birthday. The amount doesn't matter - it's the "counting" that counts.

May your special day be filled with joy from morning until night, and may the "24's" that lie ahead be especially glad and bright.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

FEBRUARY 2003

Bob R.

12 years

Hal S.

31 years



FIVE GREAT LESSONS

Most Important Lesson... During my second month of nursing school, our professor gave us a pop quiz. I was a conscientious student and had breezed through the questions, until I read the last: "What is the first name of the woman who cleans the school?" Surely this was some kind of joke. I had seen the cleaning woman several times. She was tall, dark-haired and in her 50s, but how would I know her name? I handed in my paper, leaving the last question blank. Just before class ended, one student asked if the last question would count toward our quiz grade. "Absolutely," said the professor. "In your careers, you will meet many people. All are significant. They deserve your attention and care, even if all you do is smile and say 'hello'." I've never forgotten that lesson. I've also never forgotten her name was Dorothy.

Pickup in the Rain... One night, at 11:30 PM, an older African American woman was standing on the side of an Alabama highway trying to endure a lashing rainstorm. Her car had broken down and she desperately needed a ride. Soaking wet, she decided to flag down the next car. A young white man stopped to help her, generally unheard of in those conflict-filled 1960s. The man took her to safety, helped her get assistance and put her into a taxicab. She seemed to be in a big hurry, but wrote down his address and thanked him. Seven days went by and a knock came on the man's door. To his surprise, a giant console color TV was delivered to his home. A special note was attached. It read: "Thank you so much for assisting me on the highway the other night. The rain drenched not only my clothes, but also my spirits. Then you came along. Because of you, I was able to make it to my dying husband's bedside just before he passed away. God bless you for helping me and unselfishly serving others." Sincerely... Mrs. Nat King Cole.

Always Remember Those Who Serve... In the days when an ice cream sundae cost much less, a 10-year-old boy entered a hotel coffee shop and sat at a table. A waitress put a glass of water in front of him. "How much is an ice cream sundae?" he asked. "Fifty cents," replied the waitress. The little boy pulled his hand out of his pocket and studied the coins in it. "Well, how much is a plain dish of ice cream?" he inquired. By now more people were waiting for a table and the waitress was growing impatient. "Thirty-five cents," she brusquely replied. The little boy again counted his coins. "I'll have the plain ice cream," he said. The waitress brought the ice cream, put the bill on the table and walked away. The boy finished his ice, paid the cashier and left. When the waitress came back, she began to cry as she wiped down the table. There, placed neatly beside the empty dish, were two nickels and five pennies. You see, he couldn't have the sundae, because he had to have enough left to leave her a tip.

The Obstacle in Our Path... In ancient times a king had a boulder placed on a roadway. Then he hid himself and watched to see if anyone would remove the huge rock. Some of the king's wealthiest merchants and courtiers came by and simply walked around it. Many loudly blamed the king for not keeping the roads clear, but none did anything about getting the stone out of the way. Then a peasant came along carrying a load of vegetables. Upon approaching the boulder, he laid down his burden and tried to move the stone to the side of the road. After much pushing and straining, he finally succeeded and noticed a purse lying in the road where the boulder had been. The purse contained many gold coins and a note from the king indicating that the gold was for the person who removed the boulder from the roadway. The peasant learned what many of us never understand. Every obstacle presents an opportunity to improve our condition.

Giving When It Counts... Many years ago, when I worked as a volunteer at a hospital, I got to know a little girl named Liz who was suffering from a rare and serious disease. Her only chance of recovery appeared to be a blood transfusion from her five-year-old brother, who had miraculously survived the same disease and had developed the antibodies needed to combat the illness. The doctor explained the situation to her little brother, and asked the little boy if he would be willing to give his blood to his sister. He hesitated only for a moment and, taking a deep breath, said, "Yes, I'll do it if it will save her." As the transfusion progressed, he lay in the bed next to his sister and smiled as he saw the color returning to her cheeks. Then his face grew pale and his smile faded. He looked up at the doctor and asked with a trembling voice, "Will I start to die right away?" The little boy had misunderstood the doctor; he thought he was going to have to give his sister all his blood in order to save her.

Reprint from The PAPER II, Indianapolis, IN

A SEEMINGLY HOPELESS STATE OF MIND AND BODY

One writer in the Grapevine was bothered (bugged?) by something he heard in meetings.

Here is his account to resolve his discomfort.

In the foreword to the first edition of the Big Book, Bill W. states that the main purpose of the book is to “show other alcoholics precisely how we have recovered.” Here, in many other passages in the Big Book and in countless other writings and speeches, it is clear that he and the early members of our Fellowship considered themselves to be “recovered alcoholics.” However, his use of the word “recovered” when used as an adjective to describe “alcoholic” always seemed to me to be very inappropriate. Bill W. had an excellent command of the English language. He chose words very carefully and used them specifically and deliberately. I could not understand how he could use such a term when it was known, even then, that alcoholics can never recover from alcoholism as a person would recover from the cold or the flu. We will never “get over” alcoholism in the sense that we will become social drinkers. We will always be alcoholics.

On page 85 of the Big Book it says, “We are not cured of alcoholism. “ Could anything be more straightforward than that? How, then, could Bill W., or anyone else for that matter, ever become a recovered alcoholic? I just couldn’t understand this apparent contradiction. And, yet, I believed that Bill had chosen and used the word deliberately. That simply added to my confusion and frustration.

I have been attending a Big Book discussion meeting in a nearby city for a while. Recently we started over again at the beginning of the book. It seemed an appropriate time to bring up my concern, as insignificant as it may have appeared to others. Was I making a big deal out of nothing? Maybe so. But, it was important to me because I perceived this as a contradiction in terms. How can we be recovered but not cured? What does recovery from alcoholism mean? I was really trying to understand what Bill was talking about because the concept of recovery is such a crucial focal point, not only for the Big Book, but for the entire program.

At that meeting, however, I could not get an explanation that was satisfactory to me. In fact, an old-timer who, like Bill W., considers himself to be “recovered,” gave me the impression that I was treading on sacred ground.

A bit scathed, but undaunted in my quest, I called the A.A. General Service Office in New York and asked to speak to someone who could give me an explanation of a passage in the Big Book. I was transferred to a very patient woman who, initially, gave me the same explanations I had heard before. I countered with all my standard rebuttals. Then, in a moment of insight, this woman said to me, “Read the sentence that comes just before the one you are quoting.” Aha! I couldn’t believe it. There it was. My answer. How could I have missed it? The statement reads, “We of Alcoholics Anonymous, are more than one hundred men and women who have recovered from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body.

So, that’s what Bill was talking about. The confusion and apparent contradiction were resolved. In this foreword, Bill had not written about recovery from the disease of alcoholism but recovery from a “seemingly hopeless state of mind and body.” The extent of this hopelessness and despair was described in detail in his story in the Big Book and in other writings. At one point during Bill’s hospitalization, a doctor had prepared Lois for the worst. Soon Bill would die or be committed to an asylum. Yet, as we all know, Bill did, indeed, recover from this hopeless condition.

Although the answer I sought was perfectly obvious and should have been apparent to me, it just hadn’t registered in my mind. Maybe I was looking for an answer that wasn’t there. Or, maybe yet, I was looking for an elaborate answer to a very fundamental question. As usual, Bill W. knew how to “keep it simple.” I was the one complicating the issue. I thank my “teacher” at GSO for this insight.

Reprinted from the NEW REPORTER, Washington D.C.

**San Fernando Valley Central Office
Intergroup Representatives Meeting –January 13, 2003**

Paul D Chairperson – Meeting opened at 7:05 pm
Treasurer's Report; See Insert

Old Business: Memorial Day Free Picnic will be Monday, May 26, 2003 at Woodley Park- section 2

Birthdays Liz B. 2yrs. Jeri B. 6 yrs. Merta 5 yrs. Darrell R. 20 yrs. Renita C. 2 yrs. Rick A. 7yrs. Karin A 6 yrs.

Service Committee information see page 2 of the Recovery Times for more information

Motion to adjourn 7:30 PM

The long form of the Intergroup Meeting Minutes for February is available at Central Office or at the Intergroup Meeting.

Prepared and submitted by: Marie B Recording Secretary

Just Pedal

At first I saw God as my observer, my judge, keeping track of the things I did wrong, so as to know whether I merited heaven or hell when I die. He was out there sort of like a president. I recognized his picture when I saw it, but I really didn't know Him. But later on, when I met God, it seemed as though life were rather like a bike ride, but it was a tandem bike, and I noticed that God was at the back, helping me pedal. I don't know when it was that he suggested that we change places, but life has not been the same since. When I had control I knew the way. It was rather boring, but predictable. It was the shortest distance between two points. But when He took the lead, He knew delightful long cuts, up mountains, and through rocky places at breakneck speeds. It was all I could do to hang on! Even though it looked like madness, He said "Pedal!" I worried and was anxious and asked "Where are you taking me?" He laughed and didn't answer and I started to learn to trust. I forgot my boring life and entered into the adventure. And when I'd say "I'm scared, " He'd lean back and touch my hand. He took me to people with gifts that I needed: gifts of healing, acceptance and joy. They gave me gifts to take on my journey. And we were off again. He said "Give the gifts away; they're extra baggage, too much weight. " So I did, to the people we met, and I found that in giving I received, and still our burden was light. I did not trust Him, at first, in control of my life. I thought He'd wreck it; but He knows bike secrets, knows how to make it bend to take sharp comers, knows how to jump to clear high rocks, knows how to fly to shorten scary passages. And I am learning to shut up and pedal in the strangest places, and I'm beginning to enjoy the view and the cool breeze on my face with God as my delightful constant companion. And when I'm sure I just can't do anymore, He just smiles and says, "Pedal!"

Where I Belong

For as far back as I can remember. I never believed I belonged anywhere. When I was growing up I didn't feel I belonged in my family in the little town that I lived in, in the church I attended, or in the schools where I was educated. I was never chosen for a team or membership in any group.

My name is Mickey and I'm an alcoholic. When I make this simple statement in an AA meeting, I seldom think about what a profound truth it expresses. In saying I belong, and I'm choosing to be part of this Fellowship.

Thanks to Tradition Three, I'm the only person in that meeting who can make that choice. Only I can know if, in my innermost self, I have a desire to stop drinking. And because this desire is the only requirement for membership in AA, I'm the only person who can say whether or not I meet that membership criterion.

When I first became aware of Tradition Three, I realized it made it possible for me to stay in AA. No one had to approve my application - in fact there was no application. It didn't matter whether others believed I was an alcoholic or had a desire to stop drinking. They may have had an opinion, but only I had that inner knowledge.

It was unimportant if I had other problems or other abilities —these things might be significant to me, but they had no bearing on my membership in Alcoholics Anonymous. And the things which might affect my ability to belong to other organization —age, sex, race, religion, marital status, profession, etc. had no value here. In fact I didn't even need to reveal these things to be accepted in AA. It was only much later that I began to glimpse the reverse side of this coin —that being accepted with no conditions other than a desire to stop drinking imposed upon me the responsibility of accepting others equally. I saw that having no requirements placed upon us gave each of us the freedom to become what our Higher Power intended, without artificial restrictions. In developing the ability to freely accept other alcoholics, I've discovered that the similarities that bind us and make us part of this Fellowship mean far more than all the superficial differences that always kept me from that feeling of belonging. Today I thank my Higher Power that I finally know where I belong. I belong in Alcoholics Anonymous.

Mickey H.

Copied from the *Silver Dollar*, March 2001

THE BURNING HUT

The only survivor of a shipwreck washed up on a small un-inhabited island. He prayed feverishly for God to rescue him, and everyday he scanned the horizon for help, but none seemed forthcoming. Exhausted, he eventually managed to build a small hut out of driftwood to protect him from the elements and to store his few possessions. Then one day, after scavenging for food, he arrived home to find his little hut in flames, the smoke rolling to the sky. The worst had happened and everything was lost.

The man shook his fist at heaven and cried, "God, how could you do this to me?!"

Early the next day, however, he was awakened by the sound of a ship approaching the island. It had come to rescue him.

"How did you know I was here?" asked the wary man of his rescuers.

"We saw your smoke signal," they replied.

Reprinted from the *Silver Dollar*. March 2001

Newletter Subscription: If you wish to receive your copy of the *Recovery Times* at your home, please complete this form and return with a check (\$7 donation to cover delivery cost) to:

San Fernando Valley Central Office
7417-E Van Nuys Boulevard
Van Nuys, CA 91405

Current Information

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ St _____ ZIP _____

New

Renewal

Additional Contribution \$ _____

Moving ???: We need your former address as well as your new address to correct our records. Fill out both forms and mail to the address above.

Former Address

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ St _____ ZIP _____