

Recovery Times

A newsletter from Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office VOL 28, NO 10 Oct. 2004

Denial - The Life-Blood of Alcoholism

Denial permeates all aspects of the problem and contradicts what is really happening, thus perpetuating the illness. By refusing to accept what is happening, the dependent drinker does not have to face reality and can subconsciously deny the consequences.

The guilt and shame can be so painful that he will not talk about his drinking or he will deny it is causing any problems. In either case, he defends his dependence. The blame can lie elsewhere. He is absolved.

Dependent drinkers will conceal the amount they are drinking. They believe they do not drink more than "normal" people, while in reality they are drinking more than the social norm.

People close to the dependent (the co-dependents) who deny what is happening are instinctively trying to protect themselves from pain and loss in their lives. Full of anxiety, they do everything they can to tidy things back into place, to make believe the situation is other than what it actually is. They minimize the value of what they have lost, refuse to accept the evidence of their emotions, deny their own feelings and adapt a "don't care" stance.

In times of great stress, those around alcoholics shut down their awareness of things that distress them too much in order to cope. This can serve to protect the co-dependent until he or she acquires the resources to deal with their true feelings about what has happened. At that point, for those facing reality, the experience can be devastating.

The pain felt at the loss of denial can be as difficult to bear as the grief felt at the loss of a loved one. At times like these, the co-dependent should seek support from others who have faced similar trauma either through self-help groups or counseling. It is also advisable to seek professional help by opening up to your family doctor.

It is of enormous help to many of us to know that an alcoholic is seen as a sick person trying to get well, not a bad person trying to be good. We alcoholics do such bad things that it is good to be told that alcoholism is an illness.

The power of denial is such that, outside the mode of recovery, most people do not want to acknowledge the problem. It is just too much to deal with. However, the power of one alcoholic to share and identify with another's experiences is what helps most people to discover that they are not alone.

Joan and Derek T., *The High and Dry*

Calendar Events

Upcoming Events

First Santa Clarita Valley A.A. Convention
October 22-24, 2004
College of the Canyons
www.scvaaconvention.com

17th Annual Inland Empire Convention
October 22-24, 2004
Hilton Hotel, San Bernadino, CA
www.ieaac.com

2005 River Roundup - Laughlin
January 14 - 16, 2005
Riverside Resort, Laughlin, NV
(800) 864-1606
www.rcco-aa.org/Conventions.html

30th Annual San Fernando Valley Convention
January 28 - 30, 2005
Burbank Airport Hilton
Burbank, CA
www.sfvaaconvention.org

2005 International A.A. Convention
June 30 - July 3, 2005
Toronto, Ont
Registration forms are now available
Info: www.aa.org

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

SERVICE COMMITTEE SCHEDULE

- Oct. 18, 2004 **SFV H&I
THIRDMONDAY**
8pm Business Meeting
Get Acquainted Workshop, 7pm,
5657 Lindley Ave.

- Nov. 1, 2004 **G.S. Districts #11, 16
FIRSTMONDAY**
6pm, 11455 Chandler Blvd, N. Hollywood

- Nov. 1, 2004 **G.S. Districts #17
FIRSTMONDAY**
6pm, orientation, 6:30pm meeting
5000 Colfax (church), N. Hollywood

- Nov. 2, 2004 **G.S. Districts #2
FIRSTTUESDAY**
6:30pm, 4011 Dunsmore
La Crescenta

- Nov. 3, 2004 **G.S. District #1
FIRSTWEDNESDAY**
6:30pm, 7552 Remmet
Canoga Park

- Nov. 3, 2004 **SFV Board of Directors**
6pm, Central Office

- Nov. 8, 2004 **SFV Intergroup
SECONDMONDAY**
6:30pm Orientation
7pm Business Meeting
St. Innocents Church
5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana

- Nov. 13, 2004 **G.S. District #7
SECONDSATURDAY**
Agua Dulce Woman's Club
33201 Agua Dulce Cyn Rd
Sharon G. (661) 951-0372

Valley Events

As of publishing time,
no Valley events have been submitted.

**CALL OR COME TO CENTRAL OFFICE
TO FIND OUT WHAT'S GOING ON.
YOU CAN ALSO VISIT OUR WEBSITE:
<http://www.sfvaa.org>**

Special Events

CENTRAL OFFICE

**November is
GRATITUDE MONTH.**

'When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the Hand of AA always to be there. And for that, I am Responsible.

Service Opportunities & News

Service Opportunities in the San Fernando Valley

PUBLIC INFORMATION COMMITTEE -

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

HOSPITAL AND INSTITUTIONS COMMITTEE -

Carries the message of Alcoholics Anonymous into hospitals, prisons & treatment facilities to those who are unable to get out to meetings. Meets the third Monday of the month 8:00 PM @ St. Innocent's Church, 5657 Lindley Ave, Tarzana, CA. Info: Central Office (818) 988-3001.

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 the second Monday, monthly, St. Innocent's Church, 5657 Lindley Ave, Tarzana, CA. Orientation 6:30pm, Meeting at 7:30pm. Contact: Central Office at 988-3001.

SAN FERNANDO VALLEY CONVENTION -

Volunteers are welcome to participate in the planning of the 2005 Convention. The Committee meets the third Tuesday of each month (except February and March); 7 PM at St. Innocent's Church, 5657 Lindley Ave, Tarzana, CA.

Central Office News

San Fernando Valley Central Office is On the Web

The SFV Central Office website is now available for Internet browsers. On the website, you can find a map to our office in Van Nuys, a listing of upcoming events in the Valley, service organization information and links to other cool A.A. websites. Our meeting schedule is also accessible on the website. Meetings are listed by day, Sunday through Saturday. Check it out: <http://www.sfvaa.org>

Do you have an article for the Recovery Times?

Email it to us at: sfvaanews@sbcglobal.net

San Fernando Valley Central Office Intergroup Representatives Meeting September 13, 2004

Sarah G. Chairperson – Meeting opened at 7:00 pm

Treasurer's Report; See Insert

Service Committee information - see page 2 and 3 of the Recovery Times for more information

Old Business: None

New Business: None

Birthdays Cinde - 12 yrs, Angela - 3 yrs, Kane - 14 yrs.

Motion to adjourn 7:30 PM

The long form of the Intergroup Meeting Minutes for September is available at Central Office or at the Intergroup Meeting. These minutes are pending approval on Oct 11, 2004

Next Meeting - Oct 11, 2004

Prepared and submitted by: Jennifer J. Recording Secretary

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

September 2004

Maggie T.	17 years
Nancy M.	29 years
Frank K.	20 years



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.

He Kept The Faith

(Reprint from The Grapevine, 1954)

BILL D., AA Number Three, died in Akron Friday night, September 17th, 1954. That is, people say he died, but he really didn't. His spirit and works are today alive in the hearts of uncounted AAs and who can doubt that Bill already dwells in one of those many Mansions in the Great Beyond.

Nineteen years ago last summer, Dr. Bob and I saw him for the first time. Bill lay on his hospital bed and looked at us in wonder.

Two days before this, Dr. Bob had said to me, "If you and I are going to stay sober, we had better get busy." Straightaway Bob called Akron's City Hospital and asked for the nurse on the receiving ward. He explained that he and a man from New York had a cure for alcoholism. Did she have an alcoholic customer on whom it could be tried?

Knowing Bob of old, she jokingly replied, "Well, Doctor, I suppose you've already tried it yourself?"

Yes, she did have a customer—a dandy. He just arrived in D.T.s. Had blacked the eyes of two nurses, and now they had him strapped down tight. Would this one do? After prescribing medicines, Dr. Bob ordered, "Put him in a private room. "We'll be down as soon as he clears up."

We found we had a tough customer in Bill. According to the nurse, he had been a well-known attorney in Akron and a City Councilman. But he had landed in the Akron City Hospital four times in the last six months. Following each release, he got drunk even before he could get home.

So here we were, talking to Bill, the first "man on the bed." We told him about our drinking. We hammered it into him that alcoholism was an obsession of the mind, coupled to an allergy of the body. The obsession, we explained, condemned the alcoholic to drink against his will and the allergy, if he went on drinking, could positively guarantee his insanity or death. How to unhook that fatal compulsion, how to restore the alcoholic to sanity, was, of course, the problem.

Hearing this bad news, Bill's swollen eyes opened wide. Then we took the hopeful tack, we told what we had done: how we got honest with ourselves as never before, how we had talked our problems out with each other in confidence, how we tried to make amends for harm done others, how we had then been miraculously released from the desire to drink as soon as we had humbly asked God, as we understood him, for guidance and protection. Bill didn't seem too impressed. Looking sadder than ever, he wearily ventured, "Well, this is wonderful for you fellows, but can't be for me. My case is so terrible that I'm scared to go out of this hospital at all. You don't have to sell me religion, either. I was one time a deacon in the church and I still believe in God. But I guess He doesn't believe much in me."

Then Dr. Bob said, "Well, Bill, maybe you'll feel better tomorrow. Wouldn't you like to see us again?" "Sure I would," replied Bill, "Maybe it won't do any good. But I'd like to see you both, anyhow. You certainly know what you are talking about."

Looking in next day, we found Bill with his wife, Henrietta. Eagerly he pointed to us saying, "These are the fellows I told you about, they are the ones who understand."

Bill then related how he had lain awake nearly all night. Down in the pit of his depression, new hope had somehow been born. The thought flashed thorough his mind, "If they can do it, I can do it." Over and over he said this to himself. Finally, out of his hope, there burst conviction. Now he was sure. Then came a great joy. At length peace stole over him and he slept.

Before our visit was over Bill suddenly turned to his wife and said, "Go fetch my clothes, dear. We're going to get up and get out of here." Bill D. walked out of that hospital a free man, never to drink again. AA's Number One Group dates from that very day. The force of the great example that Bill set in our pioneering time will last as long as AA itself.

Bill kept the faith—what more could we say?

Bill W.

Reprinted from the *Grapevine*, Volume 11 Issue 6
November 1954

International Convention - Alcoholics Anonymous Toronto, Canada June 30 - July 3, 2005

The 70th birthday of Alcoholics Anonymous will be celebrated on Lake Ontario next June/July. That may seem like a long time away; but if you are thinking about attending, we recommend you start to take action. Here's information that might be useful to you.

Dates: June 30 - July 3, 2005

Registration Fee: \$85 pre-reg, \$95 onsite

Registration Deadline (for Pre-Reg): May 16, 2005

Ways to Register:

Online - www.aa.org

FAX - (514) 228-3154

Mail - 2005 International Convention
c/o Laser Registration
1200 G Street NW, Suite 800
Washington, DC 2005-3967

Registration Questions: (514) 847-2214

Email: 2005IC@laser-registration.com

Housing: Once your registration form is received, you will be sent housing information.

Refunds: Refunds will be made upon receipt of written request before May 16, 2005.

Air Travel: Flight discounts are available through the STAR ALLIANCE. (Note: STAR ALLIANCE is a group of airlines that we won't post here. Talk to your travel agent). Event Code is AC001S5.

More Info (like Frequently Asked Questions, etc.) - www.aa.org

Can't Make it to Toronto, But Obsessed with Planning?

The 75th Anniversary Convention will
be held July 1 - 4, 2010,
San Antonio, TX

The 80th Anniversary Convention will
be held in July, 2015, Atlanta, GA



Co-founder Quotes

"It is a most wonderful blessing to be relieved of the terrible curse with which I was afflicted. My health is good and I have regained my self-respect and the respect of my colleagues. My home life is ideal and my business is as good as can be expected in these uncertain times."

I spend a great deal of time passing on what I learned to others who want and need it badly. I do it for four reasons:

- 1. Sense of duty.*
- 2. It is a pleasure.*
- 3. Because in so doing I am paying my debt to the man who took time to pass it on to me.*
- 4. Because every time I do it I take out a little more insurance for myself against a possible slip."*

Doctor Bob, from "Doctor Bob's Nightmare",
Alcoholics Anonymous, page 171

What An Absolute Order

Honesty, unselfishness, purity and love. Talk about an order! You mean to tell me that I'm supposed to be loving, unselfish, pure and honest to everyone, everywhere, all the time? I can't go through with it! It seems the problem with the Four Absolutes is that they are, well, so absolute!

Ironically, I didn't always feel that way. When my sponsor told me about the Absolutes early in my sobriety, I embraced them. I was having trouble grasping the Twelve Steps. I was asking myself questions I didn't even know how to answer. "Have I truly admitted that I'm an alcoholic?" "Was I really insane?" "Have I given my will and my life to a power I'm not even sure exists?" I thought I had done those things, but how could I be sure?

Then along came the Four Absolutes. Finally I had something my black-and-white mentality could grasp. No more middle ground. Either I was honest or not. Period.

I started using the Absolutes throughout the day. And they worked immediately. No, I didn't become a saint.

No, just because I was thinking about being loving didn't make me any less angry with those around me. Instead, I began to see just how far I was from living up to the ideals the Four Absolutes presented. I realized how difficult it actually is for me to be honest, even in the little things. I saw how painful it is for me to sacrifice for the good of someone else. I realized that I really have no real concepts of what purity and love are.

But the Absolutes are my measuring stick. They are a way for me to judge how well I'm living the Twelve Steps in my life. They provide the standard by which I can measure how far down the spiritual path I have traveled. That, I believe, is important because I've learned that I can't rest on my spiritual progress. I need to always be moving forward toward living a life where the Absolutes are my second nature.

I know today that if I'm not truthful, I become guilt ridden. If I am not loving and unselfish, I'm full of resentment and anger.

Twelve Steps to a Slip: Know the Danger Signals

1. Start missing meetings for any reason, real or imaginary
2. Become critical of the methods used by other members who may not agree with you in everything.
3. Nurse the idea that someday, somehow, you can drink again and become a controlled drinker
4. Let the other fellow do the 12th Step work in the group. You are too busy.
5. Become conscious of your AA "seniority" and view every new member with a skeptical and jaundiced eye.
6. Become so pleased with your own views of the program that you consider yourself an "elder statesman."
7. Start a small clique within your group, consisting of only a few members who see eye to eye with you.
8. Tell new members in confidence that you yourself do not take certain parts of the 12 Steps too seriously.
9. Let your mind dwell more and more on how you are helping others rather than on how much the AA program is helping you.
10. If an unfortunate member has a slip, drop him at once.
11. Cultivate the habit of borrowing money from other members, then stay away from meetings to avoid embarrassment.
12. Look upon the 24-hour plan as a vital thing for new members, but not for yourself. You have outgrown the need of that long ago.

Things to Think About

NOTES FROM SOME SIGNS

ALONG RECOVERY

The only difference between stumbling blocks and stepping stones is how we use them.

Happiness is not getting what you want; it is wanting what you get.

Thoughts are not things and feelings are not facts; they only have the power we give them.

There is no situation too difficult to be bettered and no unhappiness too great to be lessened.

When you're flat on your back, there's no way to look but up.

Fear is not a shortcoming- it's an emotion. Our reaction to it can be the shortcoming.

The way to get anywhere is to start from where you are.

Wherever you go- there you are.

TOO DIFFICULT

DIFFICULT TO SAY WHEN INEBRATED:

Indubitably

Innovative

Preliminary

Proliferation

Cinnamon

VERY DIFFICULT TO SAY WHEN INBRATED:

Specificity

British Constitution

Passive-aggressive disorder

Loquacious Transubstantiate

DOWNRIGHT IMPOSSIBLE TO SAY WHEN INEBRATED:

Thanks, but I don't want to have sex.

Nope, no more booze for me.

Sorry, but you're not really my type.

Good evening officer, isn't it lovely out tonight?

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 _____