

First Things First

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The Monthly Newsletter of The Rock Solid Group of Alcoholics Anonymous

Contempt Prior to Investigation

Special points of interest:

- What's New with The Rock Solid Group
- Members Share Their Thoughts
- Website News and Info You can Use
- Upcoming Events
- Lots of Straight Talk

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Rather than analyzing the Big Book version of Step 11 in this article, I decided to post one of my all time favorite quotes (which I stumbled across yet again the other day).

Like many other quotes in AA literature, it's not from a member of any twelve step program--the man to whom it's attributed died 30 years before Bill W. got sober--but has been adopted over the years.

"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.

Kind of a cock-eyed double negative, almost sarcastic statement, but once distilled it makes sense to me and rings true of the way I often judged the world until about two years ago, when I became 'teachable':

If I choose to live a life where I refuse to open my mind to new ways of thinking and new experiences then I will remain in the same place I am now - nothing will change. That's how I read it anyway.

The quote is particularly relevant to my life experience of coming to grips with a "God as I understand him". It is very easy to prove the non-

existence of my old version of God (the guy with the white beard dishing out thunderbolts) - and I never failed to win those arguments. It was not until I let go of that particular old idea absolutely that I started to see things differently, at first a little and then, later, a lot.

Today, I don't pretend to 'understand' God any more than a gerbil understands the wind patterns of Jupiter. I will never achieve perfect spirituality or perfect humility (After all, it's about 'progress', not 'perfection'). But I am spiritual enough to know that there is an omniscient force in this universe, and I'm humble enough to know that I ain't it!

I love the irony in the fact that He made me just barely smart enough to be astounded at the vastness of my ignorance.

My Higher Power is benevolent and extravagant. He overdoes all of his 'stuff'. I've been given everything in abundance. As I recount the things for which I'm grateful, His plan for me becomes clearer.

At the start of each day, I ask Him to keep me sober just for that day. So far, it has worked without fail. My ego loves for me to try to take credit for my sobriety, but a rooster wants to take credit for the sun coming up, too.



That's all I know about God. That's all I need to know, too.

I'm obviously not alone as these themes are expressed at the end of an appendix to the Big Book Appendix II - Spiritual Experience.

This particular appendix is tucked away right at the very end of the Big Book, which is kind of a shame. For me (a disillusioned non-believer) it was a great insight... But I guess you get to see these things when the time is right:

"Nothing, absolutely nothing, happens in God's world by mistake."

But that's the subject for another post.

Members Share Their Thoughts

This Side of the Dirt

Ever since I was a child I have been a fighter and acted like a rebel in everything I do. This disease of alcoholism and addiction sooner or later will eventually get to you.

Please take this message from a person who speaks from experience and honestly does know. The older you get and the more you do it the symptoms don't tell you, but the hurt it does to you really will show.

I fought this disease all my life, and getting by with the daily victories I have won. If you do not quit and do something about it, somewhere in time you will be done.

Take this advice for what it's worth that it doesn't hurt. You can enjoy the rest of your life on this side of the dirt!

— D. S. B.

My Recovery

Recovery, no doubt, will be a lifelong process to keep me from losing what I cherish most: freedom, family, friends, respect, a job, money, pleasure and sanity. Now that I've gotten back a little of each, my recovery will help keep me from losing them back to my addiction.

— Buck V.

Sanctuary

Like a monk in olden days
Who heard the call to prayer
and faith

I shuffle in and take a chair
among my brothers;

Waiting there to ease their minds
of heavy cares, and share
their hearts across the chairs.

Hope is found here.
Hope and caring,
and from sorrow, sanctuary.

— B.

My Attitude

The longer I live and the older I get,
the more I realize the importance and
impact that one's attitude has on
one's life.

To me, it is more important than
money, possessions, appearance, edu-
cation, skills, giftedness, failures or
successes, past or present, and the
circumstances of every minute in our
everyday lives. It will make or break
a family, a home, your health, your
happiness, a church, your friendships,
relationships, a company, a team, an
association, but most of all your de-
sire to continue to survive and stay
positive daily.

The remarkable thing is that all of us

have a choice every day regarding our
attitude that we will embrace for that
day.

We cannot change our past, nor shall
we close the door on it. We cannot
change the attitudes of others, or that
certain people will act in certain ways.
The one thing that is certain is that we
as humans cannot change the inevita-
ble

The only thing we can do is hope, play
and pray on one of the things we do
have control of, and that is our atti-
tude. I am convinced that life is not
about what happens to me or you, but
how we react to it. We are all in con-
trol of our own destiny, with the help
of prayer, faith, and a belief in God.
He will guide you. Ask Him and let
Him.

— D. S. B.

October Statistics

Starting Balance	25.46
Income	118.18
Expenses	122.50
Ending Balance	21.14
Avg Meeting Attendance	29
Unique Website Visitors	38
New Members	7

R S G S F R E R Q T S O R F R
 U X R I C G X N A R E T E V H
 H H I U A V D J K Y N I A R P
 E P V I F F A C G F E A S T L
 X J L E D L Y A R D W O R K M
 T O Y J Y G K U H O C X M Y E
 F M S R A E N M U T U A E D D
 M S T Q R C K R Y J E D K E I
 S A U U Z E S R H B U L T H T
 S I F M C T B D U T C M D D A
 E N F C K A I N I T S F S Z T
 L T I N O M Q T A N I B R V E
 B S N I O N A H Y R O I W P R
 W D G J Y R U W V Q C E E D R
 Y H G T G E S M A Y A X L L J

AUTUMN
 BLESS
 CRANBERRY
 FEAST
 FOLIAGE
 FROST
 GRATITUDE
 MEDITATE
 RAINY
 SAINTS
 STUFFING
 TURKEY
 VETERAN
 YAMS
 YARDWORK



NOVEMBER
 "Blessings"

Can you
 find the
 hidden
 words
 from the
 list?

Trivia Question

Answer on back page

Mid-November of each year, a
 meteor shower reaches peak visi-
 bility. Their name comes from
 the constellation (in the zodiac)
 from which they appear to
 stream. The book "The Stars Fell
 on Alabama" refers to their 1833
 occurrence. Can you name them?

(The name is an UNLISTED answer
 in the word search puzzle.)

Members Share Their Thoughts

I Will Not Whine

I broke the law and I'm sitting here doing my time, because I stepped over the line, when I was convicted and guilty of doing the crime.

The things I have done are so very wrong, I cannot lie to myself and sing a sad song. The blame is all mine. The price I am paying of losing my freedom, I will not whine.

I had shed too many tears when I cry by myself that my heart hurts really bad, The shame, pain and feelings I have inside me is greatly sad.

The tears are so true when all I can do is sit and cry. I am going through so many changes now that I am clean and sober I now know what I was doing to myself was so wrong and that is the reason why.

I have to give up many old habits and that is such a scare. I started with weeding my garden of the so-called

friends who have not been there. They have not been around to help my family and me, the way it is supposed to be; they are the ones who have proven to me they really don't care.

The people that have always been there for my family and me have shown to me what they are truly all about; they are the kind of people I need in my life now and forever and there is definitely no doubt.

With the right help along this road I am on that I trust and know, I am confident I can and will make it when I give it a go.

I am not a monster, or a person who is so bad; with the help and counseling I've been getting I can stay on this road to recovery and stop disappointing the people that I love and care for—especially my Dad.

I have a chance one more time to change my life and it's not too late. I

thank God every day for this opportunity to start over again with a brand new slate.

I hold myself accountable for everything I have done, when I finish making my amends, I then in my heart will know I have won. I accept that the blame is all mine. I am sure it is only a matter of time that I will be a new and changed man, so ... I will not whine.


When I have given up all the negative things I have to, the way it has to be, I then will, for the first time in my life, be comfortable, satisfied and happy just being me.

I want to do the things I enjoy, like fishing with my father when I was a boy. If I want to catch bigger fish, I have to go to another lake. I won't quit fishing because I know that's all it will take.

I must always take my best fishing poles and continue to put on new line, so when I catch the biggest he won't get a way, so...I will not whine.

— D. S. B


November 2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat					
				1	2	3					
4	Big Book 8:00	5	12 & 12 8:00 Step Seven Book Drawing	6	Speaker 8:00 Cassandra R.	7	8	9	10		
11	Big Book 8:00	12	12 & 12 8:00 Step Eight	13	Speaker 8:00 Denise H.	14	15	16	17		
LAI Steering Committee 2:00	18	Big Book 8:00	19	12 & 12 8:00 Step Nine	20	Discuss 8:00 Chairman's Choice	21		22	23	24
25	Big Book 8:00	26	12 & 12 8:00 Tradition Eleven	27	Speaker 8:00 Linda L. Financial Report	28	29	30			



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We're on the Web!
www.aarocksolid.org

We are The Rock Solid Group of Alcoholics Anonymous. We are what is referred to as an 'inside' group -- that is, we function from within a correctional facility-a 'halfway house', if you will. Residents are typically in house for one to six months. Our meetings are open to all current residents of the transition center. Former residents and guests may attend by special permission from the staff. Because the general public is not free to attend our meetings, and because current residents are not free to attend outside AA meetings at will, an inherent limitation exists for most group members to experience everything that Alcoholics Anonymous has to offer. Since its inception in April 2006, our group's focus has been to bring the 'look and feel' of outside meetings to residents.

For many of us, The Rock Solid Group is our first exposure to AA. We know our group is unique; we know it is special. We are continually looking for lead speakers on Wednesday nights. If you have a story to share and are in the area, please contact us. Thanks for reading about us, and please learn more at our website, www.aarocksolid.org.

Trivia Answer: The meteor shower in question are known as the "Leonids", named for the constellation Leo from which they seem to emanate. Did you find it?

A Parting Shot...



"Straight Talk"

I believe the 12 steps become nothing more than superstition when people choose things like trees, door knobs, or their dog as their Higher Power. I believe also, for some, that AA can become a form of codependency. Whenever other people, or an organization, become one's Higher Power, isn't that codependency? Step Three speaks of committing one's will and life to God as one understands God. To substitute people in place of God

is saying, "I'll commit myself to people so they can run my life." That's codependency, my friend! Why do the 12 steps at all if you don't deal with the issue of God?

I'll be the first to admit that there is a bunch of crap being done in the name of God, but that is a statement about those people and their practices. Let them take accountability for their own garbage, but don't let them rob you of the One reality behind this universe Who can help you out of your problems.

There was a man in a mental institution named George, so the story goes, who believed he was dead. No matter what anyone said or did, they were unable to convince him he was alive. One day a young caseworker had an idea. He said, "Tell me, George, do dead men bleed?"

George thought for a moment, and said, "No, dead men don't bleed." The caseworker took a needle, pricked

George's finger, and squeezed. A drop of blood appeared. George's eyes grew wide as he saw the blood and said, "Well, what do you know? Dead men DO bleed!"

Like George, no one can convince you of anything against your will, no matter how much evidence is presented, nor should anyone try.

I can only share what works for me—the things which I honestly believe to be the truth.

You don't need to be a rocket scientist to work the 12 steps. It is, as they say, a simple program. The hardest thing it asks of you is to have an open mind, and to get real with God.

Unless you've already made other plans, have a great day!

-Todd S.