

The View

Newsletter of the Ridgeview Alumni Association Steering Committee
Summer 2006

Volume XIV

Smyrna, GA



Photo provided by: M. McGuire

“Recovery – The Path to Success”

The Ridgeview Alumni Association
3995 South Cobb Drive – Smyrna, GA 30080

Summer Focus: Recovery – The Path to Success

Upcoming Events

Monthly 1st Friday Speaker Meetings

Alumni Fall Retreat – September/October 2006

Halloween Dance – October 28, 2006

Gratitude Dinner – November 19, 2006

Lighting of Serenity Garden – December 2006

New Years Eve Dance – December 31, 2006

Spring Fling – Alumni Weekend – June 1 – 3, 2007

Contact any Alumni Steering Committee Member for more information or join us every Thursday at 5:45pm at Pro North on the Ridgeview Campus.

This issue along with archival copies are available on our website at www.ridgeviewalumni.com. The Newsletter will be in an Adobe PDF format; our website will link to download the FREE Adobe reader, allowing you to read and print the Newsletter at your leisure.

If you would like to be added to our E-mail notification list when a new Newsletter is placed on the site, E-mail us at steering@bellsouth.net or contact us thru the Web site, please put "newsletter" in the subject line.

Thank you to all those who submitted articles for this edition of the Newsletter; if we have learned anything in recovery it is that *We cannot keep what we have if we do not give it away!*

EDITORS:

Dawn B.
Nancy S.
Stuart S.

Summer Focus: Recovery – The Path to Success

Benefits of Recovery

Submitted by: Anonymous

There are two benefits from recovery: we have short-term gains and long-term gains.

The short-term gains are the things we can do today that help us feel better immediately.

We can wake up in the morning, read for a few minutes in our meditation book, and feel lifted. We can work a Step and often notice an immediate difference in the way we feel and function. We can go to a meeting and feel refreshed, talk to a friend and feel comforted, or practice a new recovery behavior, such as dealing with our feelings or doing something good for ourselves, and feel relieved.

There are other benefits from recovery, though, that we don't see immediately on a daily or even a monthly basis. These are the long-term gains – the larger progress we make in our life.

Over the years, we can see tremendous rewards. We can watch ourselves grow strong in faith until we have a daily personal relationship with a Higher Power that is as real to us as a relationship with a best friend.

We can watch ourselves grow beautiful as we shed shame, guilt, resentments, self-hatred, and other negative buildups from our past.

We can watch the quality of our relationships improve with family, friends, and spouses. We find ourselves growing steadily and gradually in our capacity to be intimate and close, to give and receive.

We can watch ourselves grow in our careers, in our ability to be creative, powerful, productive people, using our gifts and talents in a way that feels good and benefits others.

We discover the joy and beauty in ourselves, others, and life.

The long-term progress is steady, but sometimes slow, happening in increments and often with much forward and backward movement. Enough days at a time of practicing recovery behaviors and piling up short term gains leads to long-term rewards.

Today, I will be grateful for the immediate and long-term rewards of recovery. If I am new to recovery, I will have faith that I can achieve the long-term benefits. If I've been recovering for a while, I will pause to reflect and be grateful for my overall progress.

The Language of Letting Go

“God As We Understand Him”

Thoughts by Rene' H.

The *Basic* Ideology that my sponsor helped me understand is the following:

There is a **GOD** and **I** am not Him

I always had a good relationship with God. I would define my thoughts before recovery as “Religious” in their nature. They covered thoughts on life in general and also about “*the hereafter*.”

I came to understand that, for me, it is all about where my thoughts originated from. The “Religious” thoughts, in retrospect, seem to be the thoughts of the Head.

In early recovery, I was trying to take all types of ideas “in”, to see what would stick. I did not understand this “God As We Understand Him,” but I was trying to grasp everything that was thrown at me in that first 60-90 days.

My first Sponsor helped me understand that this “God Thing” is located in a different part of my body and goes by a “Different Name.”

This “God As We Understand Him” is located in the Heart and we call it “Spirituality”. This is where the “Rigorous Honesty” part of the “AA Program” causes it to relocate from my “Head to my Heart.”

This new found “Spirituality” is *not in Conflict* with my “Religious” mind. They actually work well together, “*If Rene' gets out of the way*” and allows the One who has all power, that One is *God As We Understand Him* to do His Job. If we let Him, He will open up *both* our Minds and our Hearts.

He will do that for us, if we just remember to complete the second half of the 11th Step, “Praying for the Knowledge of His Will and the Power to carry it out.”

This is when *We* are able to begin to help our fellow alcoholics achieve sobriety, “*One Day At A Time*.”

I know that God always has a good laugh when I try to show Him my plans. I do not know what God has planned for me. I may not know for 5 or 10 years what my real purpose is in the AA program, but then again, *IT* may be tomorrow when God calls on me. I have to be *Sober*, in order to be of any service to another alcoholic in need.

I must keep it simple...

*There is a **GOD** and **I** am not Him*

Leaving

Submitted by: Dick White

No matter that my insurance company says they will fund the half-day outpatient program at the Institute the admin money mongers won't allow it! So I'm out of this sanctuary surrounded by the world at large. Leaving after a month and a half of secure and structured living in this caring community of doctors, therapists, monitors and a full service staff will be difficult and scary. Back to the boulevards of broken dreams and places where I couldn't do it on my own.

My time at the Institute had assisted me through various processes to look at my past, present and future of choice. The tools to do this were simple enough: do and follow the steps for success, attend meetings, and get a qualified sponsor. Why was I fearful? Well, at the Institute I lived with a band of brothers 24/7. In fact I had been elected

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President of our group which gave me responsibilities and recognition that I enjoyed. I felt secure in my environment and was not confident about going home and being on my own. Sometimes you can't do it on your own. But then I had left a lot of stages and places in my life and found fulfillment and success in new environs. I could do it again! I possessed the knowledge, confidence and ability to do it! And most importantly, I had the loving support of my wife, friends and church. So I was on my way out of there. I started my out processing and to my surprise, though I was leaving the Institute, it was going to support me through its Aftercare Program and Alumni Association. The program requires a contract of commitment, attending a support group meeting once a week and participating in Alumni Association meetings, activities and work projects designed to assist recovery.

I've been away for six months now, but return twice weekly and, as one of my fellow alums said, "It's like coming home!" There is always the camaraderie and support of fellow alumni, a sense of accomplishment and renewed confidence from the projects and good coffee and fellowship. It's a nice feeling...like I never left and it will always be there for us.

Mississippi Rain

Submitted by: Traci W.

*"Pack your bags its time to go
For your mama told you so
Grab a blanket and two bottles- one for each of us
Enough to kill the pain
To ease the Mississippi rain"*

*Bible traded in for a Chevrolet
The charred remains of night and smell of whisky guide the
way*

*We were trying to escape down a black highway
I felt the slamming of the brakes
Into a Mississippi day*

*"Be a good girl now and run inside
Buy yourself a drink and some candy," she lied,
"I'll keep the motor running"
And I heard her say a familiar nursery rhyme as I walked
away
On a Mississippi day*

*She said, "Hush my baby don't say a word
Mamma is a mocking bird
She's going to spread her wings and fly away
On a Mississippi day"*

*Well destiny was written and the storms of life came
I heard my silent voice calling out her name*

*That's when a tiny hand reached up in vain
There was nothing left, but the Mississippi rain*

My mother left me when I was 2 years old. In the midst of a divorce from my father, she was off on a drunken spree. Her actions would cause her to lose custody of me. We had court-ordered visitation for one hour every other week in the judge's chambers at the Dekalb County Juvenile Court. I counted the time once. It came to 24 hours a year; which means I had spent a total of 12 whole days with my mom by the time I turned 14 and told her I never wanted to see her again. Why should I see her? How could a mother really love a child and do what she did to me? It would take 20 years, and a thousand tears, but I would have the answer to my questions.

You see, I had to walk a mile or two in my mother's shoes to really understand. I had to drink alcoholically, think solely of myself, make the poor, impulsive decisions that only a brain-fogged egomaniac can make. You see, I found myself standing in the same place my mother had once stood. Divorced, scared, drinking and running, I abandoned my children, not physically, but emotionally. I left my husband and children and focused only on myself. I lied to my children because I was embarrassed of what my life had become. I pulled away from fear. I didn't know how to be a mom on my own. I was hiding my drinking, but I couldn't hide the change it made in me. My oldest son was 14 years old the day I went to pick him up for our visitation. Looking in my eyes my son said he never wanted to see me again. He shut the door in my face.

There are no words that can describe the feelings one feels when rejected by a child. To be told by my son that I was selfish, self centered and not a person he would choose to be a friend, much less a mom, was very painful. But it took that pain for me to wake up from the fantasy I had created in my mind. Reality was I was only thinking of myself and not of my children. Alcohol was not working for me and I needed help. Suddenly I knew what my mother had felt so long ago when I told her I never wanted to see her again. I felt her pain and I felt my own. I knew what had to be done.

I called my mother that day and from the bottom of my heart told her how sorry I was for hurting her, for hurting myself and for the years apart we could never get back. Twenty years of anger and blame melted away with that one phone call. You see, what I didn't know was that my mother never had another drink after she lost me. She sobered up and went on with her life, loving me from a distance. My mom listened to me as I asked her forgiveness, then she did something I hadn't considered. My mom made amends of her own. She told me something I will never forget. She said "A mother's love never dies." Her love never died and neither would mine. My mom told me to put my son's name in my God box and to let go. She told me he would come back in

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God's time, to have faith. My mom suggested that I be present for him as much as possible by staying sober.

Fear had been replaced by faith. I had temporarily lost a relationship with my son but it had been replaced with the renewed relationship with my mom. We had a stronger bond than either of us ever imagined possible. We shared the bond of two survivors of the same sinking ship. Life had come around full circle.

I wrote "Mississippi Rain" as a song for my mom. It helped with my feelings of her abandonment and with my feelings of abandoning my own children. I find it curious how life repeats itself. I wonder what life has in store for my son. As for my mom, I know she has forgiven me. I know I have forgiven her, and most importantly I know I have forgiven myself. So when I begin to lose hope with my son – and there are many days I do – I know I can pick up the phone and call my mom. She is living proof of this program's promises. She is my strength.

I cannot change my past. But I can be a healthy, sober woman today. The day will come when my son, like I, realizes his mother is not hateful or cruel, just human. The day will come when my son comes back to me. The day will come. I have faith.

Recovery Today Encompasses My Life Full Circle

Submitted by: Dawn B.

Today I cannot imagine going back to where I was four and a half years ago. I've experienced and gained so much in life during these short four and a half years I wouldn't want that to ever change.

I have to admit the first three years of my Recovery were fairly easy. Yes, I had a life scare, but to my amazement my family and friends were there for me as I was restored back to health; or at least to where I was before I ended up in the hospital. Shortly thereafter I knew that something needed to change in my life – it was time that I started taking care of myself physically. I was so afraid to alter anything in my Recovery – I did not know what part of it was keeping me sober. I had to have faith that this was what I was supposed to be doing next. I leaned on my friends to give me the strength and courage I knew I would need, and moved into the next phase of my Recovery.

Today I believe Recovery should be encompassed throughout your entire aspect of daily living; and to be totally honest, I didn't take very good care of myself physically. I may have looked put-together on the outside; inside I was physically falling apart. "I still wasn't sure if I was worth it." One thing I did know and have heard many times before in AA, is "Fake it till you make it." And this is what I decided to do.

I had been a member of my local YMCA for over a year; I used my membership for about 3 months then I stopped going – it wasn't so much that I was lazy it was more that I

didn't care and it was not a priority to me. Like with drugs and alcohol I had to be in enough pain to make a change; I knew I needed to but I didn't want to do the work – I wanted an easier softer way. I wanted immediate gratification.

My doctor told me that I was the perfect candidate for the stomach stapling surgery; but quite honestly the thought terrified me. First of all, I was afraid of having to take any type of narcotics – I didn't want that addiction "gene" turned back on; second, the surgery would be different for me – it wouldn't work; I would be the exception; and third, I like to eat all types of foods and I would be greatly restricted on what I could eat. You see, I did the research on this surgery and I knew it was not for me. I had yet to try everything. It was time for me to make my health a priority.

In April of 2005 I went back to the gym; I did well for about 3 months then I started to have physical pain in my hip. I went to the doctor and I heard what I wanted to hear; "you have osteoarthritis" and you hurt because you are getting older and are exercising and using it more. He didn't say to stop, he only told me the reason for the pain, but I took it as; you better stop exercising if you want the pain to go away. I also heard my hematologist say – stay away from leafy greens as it makes your blood thicker; so I immediately started to eat more carbohydrates; which is the last thing you need to eat when you are a diabetic. I found I have selective hearing when it comes to my health. Again, I was looking for the easier, softer way!

It did not take long for the diabetes to kick me in the a**; within 2 months I was beginning to feel as bad as I did before I got sick and ended up in the hospital. So, I made a decision on a date to head back to the gym – November 1st was the drop dead date, and I waited until then to go back. I went late at night in hopes of not being seen by anyone, but as soon as I walked in the front door – there was my trainer. Her first words to me were "where have you been" and then she said; we have this great new program starting in January and I think you are perfect for it! Wow! Can you say that God intervened on this one!

It was a commitment I had to make to myself as the class was 6 days a week for 4 months. It was exactly what I needed; it focused on obtaining a healthy fit lifestyle, not how much weight can you lose in 4 months. It gave me the accountability I needed to stay with the program,, accountability not only to me but to others. Sound familiar...

Being the overachiever I am I wanted to get a jumpstart on "being the best student" in the class so I went regularly to work out from November thru the holidays until the class started on January 9th. Was I the most fit when the class started; heck no; I used muscles I didn't even know I had. But those two months did do something for my health. I went to see my endocrinologist January 16th and to my amazement my blood work came back great! My doctor took me off of 2 of the 3 medications I had been taking for

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diabetes. He said come back in 2 months and keep doing what you are doing – it's working.

Now I have to say the exercise is only a small part of achieving and maintaining health. You really need to understand nutrition. For me that means a healthier eating lifestyle and exercise – it means I can eat anything, but in moderation. However, I must exercise to continue on the path I have worked so hard for over the last 8 months.

This journey of a healthier lifestyle is not easy – it is one of the most difficult things I have had to do in my life as you must eat to sustain life. I know for me today this is what works; would I like an easier, softer way – you bet; but those usually don't last.

I've heard the following about life; but it really hit home when I heard my Nutritionist say it; "Food is neither good or bad, it just is."

Our Healing Journey – The Clock or the Compass Submitted by: George Mize

We live in a modern society that loves short-cut techniques. Yet Recovery cannot be achieved by taking the right short-cut. There is no short-cut. But there is a path. The path is based on principles, spiritual in nature, which if practiced as a way of life will remove the obsession to drink or use and enable us to be useful and whole.

Healing happens in the mind. We begin to trust that whatever comes to us is simply an avenue of learning, an opportunity to feel love, gratitude, forgiveness, and peace. A Health Challenge, in my case addiction and cirrhosis from chemical abuse, controls us when we think we are only body rather than *Spirit*. *Suppose I have a choice to do something which is an enormous TEST to my common sense; what am I going to do?*

My fear-filled mind created a fearful world of experiences. Nothing blocks the path of the Spirit-filled mind. Everything blocks the path of the Ego-led mind. Our journey is a teaching tool for peace, joy, love, harmony, zest, and accountability. If there is one message, it is that a meaningful life is more a matter of what I do than how fast I get it done – to be directed by an internal compass, not some clock on the wall.

Simply doing more faster failed to get at the chronic causes – the underlying reasons for the pain. It did nothing to really solve the chronic pain that comes from not putting **first things first**. All my wishing, and even all the work, not based on valid spiritual principles did not produce quality-of-life results. It's not enough to dream, it's not enough to try, it's not enough to set goals or climb ladders. It's not enough to value. All my efforts have to be based on practical realities that

produce the results. Always, there is one thing among all others that must be done first – **Don't Use, Don't Drink.**

For many of us there's a gap between *the compass and the clock* – between what's deeply important to us and the way we spend our time. And we struggle with the contrast, often conflict, between the clock and the compass. The *clock* represents our commitments, appointments, schedules, goals, activities – what we do with, and how we manage, our time. The *compass* represents our vision, values, principles, conscience, direction- what we feel is important and how we lead our lives. We're constantly making choices about the way we spend our time, from the summer to the winter seasons, to the individual moments in our lives. We're also living with the consequences (good or bad) of those choices. Maybe we used time management and chose to "work harder, not smarter."

In my addiction, what I valued was in opposition to the natural laws that govern peace of mind and quality of life. I based my life on illusion and set myself up for disaster. I was told that I didn't know who I was or where I was going. And that I couldn't get to where I wanted to go from where I was. I would have to start right here and right now. Giving up my old life for a new "resurrected life" meant relying on FAITH and TRUST instead.

It would seem the wisest thing in the world for me to choose my path. It's my right, and people around me would consider me a fool for not choosing and giving the choice to God. Rather than me choosing the right path, I have had to rely on God choosing for me. I have had to learn the hard way to walk according to the standard which has its eye on God (God's will, if you prefer). Whether I think rightly or wrongly, according to my conception I have in my mind, is not relevant. It's like saying, "Yea, but...but...but." As I began living the life of faith in God, Natural laws transformed into the Spiritual, and my Health Challenge no longer controlled me. My cirrhosis is gone. My life is recovery.

Today, I trust entirely in God. When He brings me to the hazard of losing my job, I risk everything in my "common sense thinking," and I leap into what He says is the adventure of a new opportunity. **Act in Faith – Believe that I believe.** It's enough to get started on "Recovery – The Path to Success." Only one out of a crowd is daring enough to bank his faith in the character of God. **What did I have to lose? What do you have to gain?**

Savvy? Submitted By: Jeff A.

The general theme is 'sobriety: the path to success'. What does that mean, exactly? The dictionary defines success as obtaining a favorable or desired outcome. That'll do, I suppose.

Now, how about a definition for sobriety? I looked it up and found: the quality or state of being sober. Okay fine, what does 'sober' mean? Not addicted to intoxicating drink c:

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not drunk. Another definition: marked by sedate or gravely or earnestly thoughtful character or demeanor. Let's go with 'not drunk'. Pretty much everybody can wrap around that without too much difficulty. I do believe that to us in recovery it means that and more. It means quite a bit more, but being not drunk/stoned/blasted/baked or tipsy is certainly part of the deal.

By the way, I am one. A drunk, I mean. I'm an addict, an alcoholic. The real deal. Not a user or abuser but a card carrying addict. One of those people who were born pretty much coded and hard-wired. It took some doing for me to arrive but make no mistake, I, by God (as I understand him), did arrive. Also, I'm a retread, a multiple offender, a relapser. That means that I've been sober, then not; clean then dirty; been in recovery then been way out of recovery. Put another way, it means I've received the miracles and blessings from my higher power when I really did not deserve them. And while living and benefiting from those blessings, I have managed to sabotage it, more than once.

We said the meaning of success was obtaining the desired, favorable outcome, right? The times that I have worked the program of recovery, I have been given the desired and favorable outcome in many areas of my life. Not just 'not being drunk'. The times when I've not been in recovery, guess what? The favorable outcomes in all areas of my life have been lost. It happens time after time. It happened to me and I've seen it happen to others. It's not that difficult to see. Anything you put before your sobriety, you will lose. Ever heard that phrase? It is so true.

The pathway that is my life is something that I cannot see. And it's not necessary that I see it. God's plan for my life is better than I could possibly imagine. And I can imagine quite a bit! What I may see as undesirable or negative at first glance could very well be blessings in disguise. If I have faith in God and live in the solution, then what seems bad may be good.

When I'm living in the midst of turmoil, it's hard to see the light at the end of the tunnel. That can be the really tough part. And it's hard to measure any success when you're in the middle of the storm. But if I work the spiritual program of recovery as best I can; if I stay connected to my creator; then the outcome can be a blessing that surpasses the favorable outcome I desire.

A few months ago my father was diagnosed with cancer. He died at his home three months after the diagnosis. I was there and witnessed his decline. I saw what a monster cancer really is. I was able to say all the things that I need to say to him. I was able to hold him and tell him that I loved him. I was able to tell him what a wonderful father he was, and was able to say goodbye. Is that not a blessing?

Shortly after my father's death, I lost my job. That was difficult. A couple of weeks ago, my wife of 15 years informed me that she wanted a divorce. I always thought that if that ever happened I would be devastated. I'm not. Are

these blessings? At first look, it seems like stormier times are headed my way.

That may be true. Or it may not. I'm not smart enough to know the answer. This morning, I said the third step prayer. I read from my devotional books. I said the serenity prayer a couple of times today. In the midst of this seemingly bad stuff, I'm feeling peaceful. I'm really not afraid. I believe that if I continue to live sober, then I will continue to be blessed with success. Savvy?

Today's thought is from the book of Touchstones by Anonymous:

Self-knowledge and self-improvement are very difficult for most people. It usually needs great courage and long struggle.
--Abraham Maslow

This is a simple program but it isn't easy. We cannot take the principles we learn and thereby possess them as if we were taking a class or reading a book. We need to live them. We can only get this program by participating with others who are also on the journey. Gradually we absorb it into every fiber of our being. This takes time and dedication.

The honesty required is sometimes frightening and painful. Anyone who remains faithful to this program has great courage and deserves deep respect. But we do not have to wait long to begin receiving the rewards. New freedoms, good feelings, and friendships quickly develop, and we are promised in this program to continue growing and to receive more benefits throughout our lives. What rewards have come from our courage and struggle?

I will give much to my spiritual growth because it gives much to me.

Expanding the Miracle

Submitted by: -Stuart S.

It's six a.m. on my second day out of the evening IOP program at Ridgeview. I had dinner with my sponsor last night who remarked on how busy I am. What I find myself thinking now is, "well, duh!"—90 in 90, Aftercare, service work, work, reading, prayer and meditation, therapy—no wonder I'm busy! Truth be told, I already miss the structure of my group at Ridgeview and I wonder how they are, what they're sharing about, do they miss me?

I came into the program voluntarily, expecting to hear a lot of things I knew already and to be told after a while to "go and sin no more." I was vaguely aware that twelve step programs were part of the treatment, but I didn't know how that mattered. It's not like they were going to make me go to

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AA or anything! Quickly dispossessed of that particular thought, I decided to trust in the process they had laid out and try someone else's techniques for not drinking, since my own attempts had failed so miserably.

I won't turn this into a confession of my story, (I don't have that kind of space here!) but suffice it to say I was a drunk with a bad habit of driving under the influence. I realize now how lucky I am to have been arrested only once and to have never hurt anyone else or myself seriously. It took that arrest and several thousands of dollars to get me to my breaking point.

Through my work at Ridgeview and talking with my sponsor, I now realize how rapidly I was deteriorating. I am convinced that if I hadn't sought help 6 weeks ago, I would be dead now. That is the main thing I thank my higher power for each day—that He, through Ridgeview and the amazing staff here, saved my life. This place is a miracle on earth, and I marvel at its mission and work.

I have a lot of work ahead of me, and I hope and pray to always recall the beginning of my road to recovery and the people I met and worked with here. I still have to trust the process and my higher power to guide me, since I proved so well that I don't know what the right steps are.

I agreed to offer something to this alumni newsletter when I was still in the program and at my first Alumni committee meeting. Sitting down to write, I thought "what were you thinking!?" What I could offer to a group of people who are "ahead" of me on this road and with more experience than I? So, I offer a bit of my story and gratitude for my recent time here. My hope is that it has been a reminder for others with more time away just how amazing this place is. The people we work with taught us so much. And the great part is, I will see those people again in Aftercare and Alumni events—I still get to come here and learn and grow with others to learn from. New teachers and sources of strength. My world gets to expand now instead of crashing down around me. What a miracle!

Sobriety Is The Rewind Button During A Falling Domino Video.

Submitted by: DEET

I didn't start drinking until I was sixteen, but right away I could tell that I was a drunk. Drinking for pleasure or to take the edge off never intrigued me or made any sense to me at all. I drank for mostly two reasons, one to get as wasted as possible, and two so I could counteract the fact that I was extremely different, always falling short of normality.

The first domino that started my domino rally fell on the very first night that I decided to drink. A friend and I set off for an overnight camping expedition with a full bottle of wine and a half finished bottle of Jack. A few hours later after numerous failed attempts in setting up the tent we both got

extremely frustrated and ended up grappling on the ground. The next thing I know he is coming at me with the small hatchet axe that we brought to nail the stakes into the ground. To this day I still have no idea whether he would have hit me with it if I weren't able to defend myself. Now, a normal human who experiences such an event probably would make sure that they never put themselves into this kind of predicament again. I, on the other hand felt like Charlie finding the golden ticket in the Wonka bar wrapper—my eyes finally seeing the light. Alcohol became my insulin for the diabetic; nothing prior to this point felt quite so right. This was the start of what I considered a consistent series of unlucky events.

I was completely blind to the fact that every one of these events had a direct correlation to my drinking—who knew? Domino after domino would fall, yet I kept rationalizing in my mind that it was going to be different the next time. Luckily for me, one of my dominoes happened to be slightly out of position resulting in a pause in the falling domino pattern. Fortunately, someone other than me made the decision of where I would be spending my domino rally interruption. They took me to a place called Ridgeview so that I could "talk to someone about my situation." The next thing I knew I was a resident waiting in a small line in front of a window that dispensed medication. I would tell them who I was; they would hand me some pills to swallow; they would also ask me to hold my hand out in front of them. I explained that my hands have always shaken like that; I quickly got the feeling that the nurse didn't believe me. I was taught that I was a sick person, no news alert there, but then they told me that I would have to explain to someone else the extent of my sickness. After being in rehab a few days, I realized that I had a decision to make. I could take the easy way out and just flick the next domino standing thus continuing the same destructive path from before, or I could start setting the fallen dominoes back upright one by one.

One of the great benefits of attending a rehab is that you interact with people who have experienced many different domino set ups and pauses. You could see how some of the resident's dominoes seemed to be almost all capsized while the lucky ones may have only had four or five fallen at this point. Right away I got a feel for where I stood in relation to my dominoes, and I had a sneaking suspicion that I might only have a few more dominoes remaining erect. This helped me immensely with my decision-making process and, therefore, I started standing my dominoes back upright. This process can be extremely difficult, especially for someone with shaky alcoholic hands. You stand them up hoping they don't wobble—or worse fall into the next one; opening the door again for a potential disaster. Sometimes I would set up some of the fallen dominoes that seemed to be well grounded, which later on fell due to a lack of honesty, selfishness or laziness. When this did occur, the only thing that saved me was a seemingly fixed domino which, even when the piece preceding it fell,

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would hold its ground. Thank you, God, for creating this domino for me when times are tough; reminding me that I have been fired from the position of General Manager of my life.

Success In Recovery **Submitted by: WDM**

WHAT is success in recovery? WHAT is recovery?

IF recovery is not ingesting mind altering substances, then success is an hour-by-hour, day-by-day exercise in discipline. Since a great deal of my thinking, planning and acting revolved around obtaining and using my drug(s) of choice, it stands to reason that an equivalent amount of time and effort are required to successfully abstain from these actions.

SO, the obvious answer to the first two questions is: I did not drink, smoke, or in any way ingest a mind altering substance since awakening; today I have been successful, right? Yeah, I suppose so.

WHEN I was out there in the real world, not too long before coming into treatment, success for me was an eight hour work day with an hour for lunch, and not having to take work home at night. No need to wear suits and ties; in fact, jeans and polo's were just fine. A five day work week, three weeks vacation, good insurance, and an income from my own personal efforts meeting and exceeding what managing seven people in nine states and producing prodigious amounts of analysis, projections, and target goals ever earned. I was fairly content and satisfied. I was successful, right? Yeah, I suppose so.

WHILE enjoying the successes of my last few years (and before being encouraged strongly to find a 'treatment program' or the judge will find one for me after he releases me from prison) it seems that I neglected to give much thought to such peripheral concerns as family, friends or personal responsibility. I was successful right? Well duh.

SEVERAL twenty-four hours have passed over the western horizon since I came into Ridgeview. Since I had the aforesaid good insurance program, I had the benefit of an old fashioned 28 day program. My experience was an educational awakening to an extremely limited lifestyle that I had fashioned for myself which pretty much excluded anything not related to my work and a very distorted vision of success. I also learned that my higher power was a locked door with a little sign that said "ELOPEMENT PROCEDURES IN EFFECT" and I thought I was already married. What was really learned was what I did not know, nor had ever given any thought to. It was so much greater than everything I'd learned in 50 years of life; it was easier to just give up trying to unlearn/relearn, undo/redo, etc. etc. etc. and just accept. Accept that I don't understand. I don't have to understand, I just have to do.

RIDGEVIEW then said, your insurance won't pay for any more treatment, it is time to rejoin the real world and

utilize the precepts of AA and do the things necessary to live happy, joyous, and free. Since you no longer want to leave the campus, it is time for you to go.

SIX things to do every day out in the real world were a must in early recovery: call my sponsor, read the Big Book or recovery literature, do not use, go to a meeting daily for at least 90 days, pray and meditate. These six efforts are the minimum requirements, if memory serves. An afterthought was added, "Take the cotton out of your ears and put it in your mouth". I can honestly say that I was successful in this endeavor. I was also surprised that during the entire 90 days without a driver's license, a cab ride was necessary only once.

90 MEETINGS in 90 days, my sponsor advised on every contact, in person and on the phone, PRAY.

I have come to believe my chances of success seemed so remote it was all he could think of. Confusion, fear, hope and more confusion eventually led to another conclusion: the promises in step nine sounded real good; working the Twelve Steps was another must to get them. I am thoroughly convinced that my Higher Power, knowing weakness and irrelative commitment needed quick results to prolong effort, granted some of the promises rather ahead of schedule. Is a good result brought about by a gift success?

OVER the weekend, a favorite meeting had a discussion leader who gave one of the best fifteen minute life stories I've heard. The topic then turned to "how AA has affected me". There were many men sharing with humor, pathos, and gut level honesty; some bordering on personal danger of legal consequences. During most of the meeting, I related to various changes others had experienced in how they deal with others, what they now find important, what facet of themselves they are currently working to improve, their successes and occasional failures, and starting all over, all brought to my mind the topic this piece is all about.

HAVING HAD A SPIRITUAL AWAKENING, several important concepts have become apparent to me: my understanding of the 'real world' is mostly misunderstanding; my definitions of important lifestyle concepts and even words are seriously flawed; a great deal of what I know about what's important (and what isn't) isn't knowledge.

BY applying most of the six 'must do's, and continuing my efforts to work the twelve steps of AA to the best of my ability (there's another flawed concept), the gift of recovery has been bestowed, at least up to the time of this writing.

LIFE, for me, has improved in ways that could not have been imagined in my earlier life. Appreciation of the minutiae of existence far outweighs the importance of understanding. Serenity is what used to be thought of as boredom. Awakening with a prayer of thanks for another opportunity to do and experience. These are a small example of what I'm trying to say.

RECOVERY is a gift received. Can Happy, Joyous and Free, which feels today like success, be called success?

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Can we have something called success that is a result of a gift? Don't know. Don't care. It feels good like success should.

CHARACTER FLAWS, on the other hand, do not get removed gift-like in my experience to date. Quite possibly the meaning of "humbly" in step seven is still not understood in its fullness—for such a small word there are a lot of meanings. Be eternally grateful for the very generous pass provided in the provisions following step twelve. "No one among us has been able to maintain anything like perfect adherence to these principles".

A walk on a tree shaded path in balmy weather is how I perceive the steps today. Afternoon thunderstorms can be dangerous. Staying on the path is success.

Correct Our Mistakes

Bill W. wrote:

"In the years ahead A.A. will, of course, make mistakes. Experience has taught us that we need have no fear of doing this, providing that we always remain willing to admit our faults and to correct them promptly. Our growth as individuals has depended upon this healthy process of trial and error. So will our growth as a fellowship.

Let us always remember that any society of men and women that cannot freely correct its own faults must surely fall into decay if not into collapse. Such is the universal penalty for the failure to go on growing. Just as each A.A. must continue to take his moral inventory and act upon it, so must our whole Society if we are to survive and if we are to serve usefully and well." (A.A. Comes of Age, pg 231)

With so very few finding lasting sobriety and the continued demise of AA groups, it is obvious that we have not remained willing to admit our faults and to correct them promptly.

Acceptance vs Acceptable

Submitted by: Anonymous

Acceptance is one of the most heavily stressed aspects of recovery, rightfully so. Acceptance can truly be one of the critical steps to serenity. Without acceptance, peace and serenity cannot be found. Oftentimes people confuse acceptance with acceptable. They seem so similar, but they are not. One of the definitions of acceptance is, "A disposition to tolerate or accept people or situations". Acceptance does not require that change is possible, or even conceivable, nor does it require that the situation be desired or approved by those accepting it. This is the aspect of acceptance that we need to practice in recovery.

Acceptable comes from a different view. A definition for acceptable is, "Capable, worthy, or sure of being accepted or received with pleasure; pleasing to a receiver; gratifying;

agreeable." There are many things in life that need to have acceptance, but are not acceptable. This may seem to be a conflict, but it is not. Acceptance often has to do with things that we have little or no control of, while things that are acceptable or unacceptable in our lives we may have control over. Since the only thing I truly have control over is myself, what is acceptable to me is in my control, because I can control myself.

In our recovery we have to have acceptance for the issues in our lives that are beyond us. We cannot inflict our desires on the world. People are going to do things we do not like, things that are unacceptable in our lives. They are not going to stop selling beer at ball games; they are not going to stop serving wine at restaurants, and people are not going to stop smoking dope at concerts, and rush hour is not going away so we can have a peaceful drive to work. These are things we need to have acceptance for, but they may still be unacceptable in our lives. We have to make the decision as to what point these issues, and others like them, become truly unacceptable in our lives and what we are going to do about them.

Some examples from my life have been, when going to a ball game or concert, I go with a group of recovering friends. I don't frequent places that emphasize alcohol. I avoid people who live their lives contrary to the aspects of recovery, even when they claim to be in recovery. Some of the things that are unacceptable to me in recovery are, being on the "marijuana maintenance program" for alcohol or "thirteenth stepping" newcomers. Things of that type may be acceptable to others, but not to me. I do need to have acceptance that others take their recovery differently. I need to know that those things are unacceptable for me and move on with my life in recovery. So what this comes down to is, what is acceptable in my life today.

The Other Path

Submitted by: TCM

Alcoholic: addicted to alcohol (somebody who is addicted to drinking beverages containing alcohol).

Deacon: A layperson who is appointed or elected to assist the minister.

Elder: Senior member of a church (*CHRISTIANITY*) a senior lay member in some Christian churches with responsibility for some aspects of church administration, the pastoral care of church members, and sometimes for teaching and preaching.

Yes, I have been all three of these people.

As a youth, I was brought up and baptized in the Baptist Church and in 1967 I joined by letter of transfer my present day church which is Presbyterian. Also, this same year I married my love in the church in which she was brought up in.

About two years after our marriage, I was elected to

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the Board of Deacon of our church. In about a year after being elected a Deacon, I was elected by the Board to be Secretary of this Board. A few years later I was asked if my name could be put into nomination to become an Elder at my church. I served in this position for several years with honor and pride.

Fast forward: I was offered a job that would take me away from my family for days at a time. While on the road, I would go out for diner and have a beer, wine, or mixed drink with my meal. I was what a lot of people would say: "A Social Drinker."

Over the years, this social drink became a daily habit forming occurrence. Was I following in my grandfather's and my dad's footsteps by becoming an Alcoholic? My grandfather died in his bed the day after a bootlegger delivered a couple of fifths to the house. My dad in the meantime received treatment and now over 25 years of sobriety has been a booster of my recovery.

In the meantime, my wife was going to our church every Sunday and I started ignoring church and my reasonability of being an elder by finding any excuse not to go to church with the family. I was what you might call a CEO of church going. Christmas-Easter- and Other special occasions.

This went on for I would say 10 plus years. My drinking and work schedules were put before God and my family. My wife would ask me to attend church with her but I would come up with something else. By Sunday evening I had had my share of liquid refreshment to last the entire week but by Monday I was looking forward to the 5 O'clock Happy Hour.

After I started treatment at "The View," I returned to the church and attended on a regular base with my wife and we have missed very few Sundays over the 2 ½ years. Having been ordained as an Elder, I have served Communion on two different occasions and volunteered my time in other aspects for my church.

During my heydays of drinking, I still had faith in God and somehow knew He would lead me back to the "flock." This intervention was in the form of a fellow employee who told me that I needed help and get it ASAP. God's Angel that was sent to deliver His Message was named Denis.

I will always have faith in GOD, but now I know He is with me to watch out for me and give me the right direction 24/7.

My faith and the love of my family has given me a new life these past 3 ½ years of being sober.

If it weren't for these two factors, I was on a downward path of destruction. Now that path has turned from taking the fork that would have probably been one of self destruction of one's soul to the path that has brought pleasure to me and my family.

Just as you take a path in the woods, this new path has been eye opening and rewarding in discovering and seeing the little things that life has to offer you.

As you walk on any path of life, you take your steps one at a time, and look around to see the little and big things that appeared along this Path; today I see the rewards that I would have missed if I had taken that OTHER PATH.

Recover vs Recovering in A.A.

Count Of Words Containing Recover in the Big Book	
recovery	34
recover	24
recovered	17
recoveries	3
recovers	2
recovering	2
TOTAL	82

How often have you been asked by a well-meaning A.A. friend, "Are you **recovering** or are you **recovered**?" This little chip of a document may throw some light upon your grasp of the question and its answer.

We have searched our Big Book (Alcoholics Anonymous) for the root **recover**. We found it 82 times.

Within the context of Alcoholics Anonymous, the synonyms *restored* or *healed* are usually an appropriate definition of the recover root.

For those who seek a *cure*, the root *cure* occurs only 4 times in the Big Book, and in no instance does it mean that the fundamental cause or malady is completely taken away—sorry. Nor does the Big Book allow us to sneak the impression that we are normal folk again, and that we can drink like they do. It is clear that eternal vigilance is the shield.

If you consider yourself "recovering" in order to maintain the consciousness that you must never drink, so be it. If you consider yourself "recovered" because the Big Book says that's the way we get, then so be that, too. Either way you will be a winner—you won't drink, and you will base your program of recovery on the teachings of the Big Book.

Here are the 82 sentences in which recover appears. Decide for yourself whether the authors of the Big Book think you are **recovering** or **recovered**.

Big Book sentences containing "RECOVER"

1. *The Story of How Many Thousands of Men and Women Have **Recovered** from Alcoholism.* [Big Book, title page]
2. Because this book has become the basic text for our Society and has helped such large numbers of alcoholic men and women to **recovery**, there exists a sentiment against any radical changes being made in it. [Big Book, page xi, line 9]
3. Therefore, the first portion of this volume, describing the A.A. **recovery** program, has been left untouched in the course of revisions made for both the second and the third editions. [Big Book, page xi, line 12]
4. WE, of Alcoholics Anonymous, are more than one hundred men and women who have **recovered** from a

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- seemingly hopeless state of mind and body. [Big Book page xiii, line 2]
5. To show other alcoholics precisely how we have **recovered** is the main purpose of this book. [Big Book, page xiii, line 5]
 6. Sixteen years have elapsed between our first printing of this book and the presentation in 1955 of our second edition. In that brief space, Alcoholics Anonymous has mushroomed into nearly 6,000 groups whose membership is far above 150,000 **recovered** alcoholics. [Big Book page xv, line 9]
 7. By the end of 1939 it was estimated that 800 alcoholics were on their way to **recovery**. [Big Book, page xiii, line 14]
 8. He sobered, never to drink again up to the moment of his death in 1950. This seemed to prove that one alcoholic could affect another as no nonalcoholic could. It also indicated that strenuous work, one alcoholic with another, was vital to permanent **recovery** [Big Book page xvi, line 32]
 9. Hence the two men set to work almost frantically upon alcoholics arriving in the ward of the Akron City Hospital. Their very first case, a desperate one, **recovered** immediately and became A.A. number three. [Big Book page xvii, line 5]
 10. ...public acceptance of A.A. grew by leaps and bounds. For this there were two principal reasons: the large numbers of **recoveries**, and reunited homes. [Big Book, page xx, line 3]
 11. The basic principles of the A.A. program, it appears, hold good for individuals with many different life styles, just as the program has brought **recovery** to those of many different nationalities. [Big Book, page xixi, line 16]
 12. The Twelve Steps that summarize the program may be called los Doce Pasos in one country, les Douze Etapes in another, but they trace exactly the same path to **recovery** that was blazed by the earliest members of Alcoholics Anonymous. [Big Book, page xxii, line 21]
 13. We of Alcoholics Anonymous believe that the reader will be interested in the medical estimate of the plan of **recovery** described in this book. [Big Book, page xxiii, line 3]
 14. In the course of his third treatment he acquired certain ideas concerning a possible means of **recovery**. [Big Book, page xxiii, line 18]
 15. This man and over one hundred others appear to have **recovered**. [Big Book, page xxiii, line 24]
 16. This is repeated over and over, and unless this person can experience an entire psychic change there is very little hope of his **recovery**. [Big Book, page xxvii, line 9]
 17. Though the aggregate of **recoveries** resulting from psychiatric effort is considerable, we physicians must admit we have made little impression upon the problem as a whole. [Big Book, page xxvii, line 25]
 18. He had but partially **recovered** from a gastric hemorrhage and seemed to be a case of pathological mental deterioration. [Big Book, page xxix, line 5]
 19. The market would **recover**, but I wouldn't. [Big Book, page 6, line 17]
 20. Nearly all have **recovered**. [Big Book, page 17, line 3]
 21. Many could **recover** if they had the opportunity we have enjoyed. [Big Book, page 19, line 17]
 22. Doubtless you are curious to discover how and why, in the face of expert opinion to the contrary, we have **recovered** from a hopeless condition of mind and body. [Big Book, page 20, line 7]
 23. So he turned to this doctor, whom he admired, and asked him point-blank why he could not **recover**. [Big Book, page 26, line 19]
 24. I have never seen one single case **recover**, where that state of mind existed to the extent that it does in you. [Big Book, page 27, line 7]
 25. Further on, clear-cut directions are given showing how we **recovered**. [Big Book, page 29, line 4]
 26. We learned that we had to fully concede to our innermost selves that we were alcoholics. This is the first step in **recovery**. [Big Book, page 30, line 13]
 27. We know that no real alcoholic ever **recovers** control. [Big Book, page 30, line 17]
 28. In some instances there has been brief **recovery**, followed always by a still worse relapse. [Big Book, page 31, line 3]
 29. We first saw Fred about a year ago in a hospital where he had gone to **recover** from a bad case of jitters. [Big Book, page 39, line 22]
 30. If a mere code of morals or a better philosophy of life were sufficient to overcome alcoholism, many of us would have **recovered** long ago. [Big Book, page 45, line 1]
 31. Those who do not **recover** are people who cannot or will not completely give themselves to this simple program, usually men and women who are constitutionally incapable of being honest with themselves. [Big Book, page 58, line 3]
 32. There are those, too, who suffer from great emotional and mental disorders, but many of them do **recover** if they have the capacity to be honest. [Big Book, page 58, line 12]
 33. Here are the steps we took, which are suggested as a program of **recovery**: [Big Book, page 59, line 8]
 34. This brings us to the Fifth Step in the program of **recovery** mentioned in the preceding chapter. [Big Book, page 72, line 12]
 35. Small wonder many in the medical profession have a low opinion of alcoholics and their chance for **recovery**! [Big Book, page 73, line 32]
 36. To watch people **recover**, to see them help others, to watch loneliness vanish, to see a fellowship grow up

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- about you, to have a host of friends—this is an experience you must not miss. [Big Book, page 89, line 9]
37. Perhaps you are not acquainted with any drinkers who want to **recover**. [Big Book, page 89, line 6]
 38. If he says yes, then his attention should be drawn to you as a person who has **recovered**. [Big Book, page 90, line 23]
 39. You should be described to him as one of a fellowship who, as part of their own **recovery**, try to help others and who will be glad to talk to him if he cares to see you. [Big Book, page 90, line 25]
 40. But insist that if he is severely afflicted, there may be little chance he can **recover** by himself. [Big Book, page 92, line 20]
 41. It is important for him to realize that your attempt to pass this on to him plays a vital part in your own **recovery**. [Big Book, page 94, line 9]
 42. If you leave such a person alone, he may soon become convinced that he cannot **recover** by himself. [Big Book, page 96, line 8]
 43. He often says that if he had continued to work on them, he might have deprived many others, who have since **recovered**, of their chance. [Big Book, page 96, line 14]
 44. He has read this volume and says he is prepared to go through with the Twelve Steps of the program of **recovery**. [Big Book, page 96, line 18]
 45. ...and that he is not trying to impose upon you for money, connections, or shelter. Permit that and you only harm him. You will be making it possible for him to be insincere. You may be aiding in his destruction rather than his **recovery**. [Big Book, page 97, line 2]
 46. Helping others is the foundation stone of your **recovery**. [Big Book, page 97, line 5]
 47. Should they accept and practice spiritual principles, there is a much better chance that the head of the family will **recover**. [Big Book, page 97, line 30]
 48. The man should be sure of his **recovery**. [Big Book, page 99, line 20]
 49. Let no alcoholic say he cannot **recover** unless he has his family back. [Big Book, page 99, line 30]
 50. Remind the prospect that his **recovery** is not dependent upon people. It is dependent upon his relationship with God. [Big Book, page 99, line 33]
 51. But many of the suggestions given here may be adapted to help the person who lives with a woman alcoholic—whether she is still drinking or is **recovering** in A.A. [Big Book page 104, line 32]
 52. He knows that thousands of men, much like himself, have **recovered**. [Big Book, page 113, line 8]
 53. Wait until repeated stumbling convinces him he must act, for the more you hurry him the longer his **recovery** may be delayed. [Big Book, page 113, line 13]
 54. Yet often such men had spectacular and powerful **recoveries**. [Big Book, page 113, line 33]
 55. The slightest sign of fear or intolerance may lessen your husband's chance of **recovery**. [Big Book, page 120, line 19]
 56. Our women-folk have suggested certain attitudes a wife may take with her husband who is **recovering**. [Big Book, page 122, line 3]
 57. At the beginning of **recovery** a man will take, as a rule, one of two directions. He may either plunge into a frantic attempt to get on his feet in business, or he may be so enthralled by his new life that he talks or thinks of little else. [Big Book, page 125, line 33]
 58. He is striving to **recover** fortune and reputation and feels he is doing very well. [Big Book, page 126, line 18]
 59. Although financial **recovery** is on the way for many of us, we found we could not place money first. [Big Book, page 127, line 15]
 60. We have **recovered**, and have been given the power to help others. [Big Book, page 132, line 30]
 61. A body badly burned by alcohol does not often **recover** overnight nor do twisted thinking and depression vanish in a twinkling. [Big Book, page 133, line 11]
 62. We, who have **recovered** from serious drinking, are miracles of mental health. [Big Book, page 133, line 14]
 63. Whether the family goes on a spiritual basis or not, the alcoholic member has to if he would **recover**. [Big Book, page 135, line 2]
 64. He is undoubtedly on the road to **recovery**. [Big Book, page 139, line 7]
 65. After satisfying yourself that your man wants to **recover** and that he will go to any extreme to do so, you may suggest a definite course of action. [Big Book, page 142, line 31]
 66. We all had to place **recovery** above everything, We all had to place recovery above everything, [Big Book, page 143, line 21]
 67. ...for without **recovery** we would have lost both home and business. [Big Book, page 143, line 22]
 68. Can you have every confidence in his ability to **recover**? [Big Book, page 143, line 25]
 69. Naturally this sort of thing decreased the man's chance of **recovery**. [Big Book, page 145, line 33]
 70. An alcoholic who has **recovered**, but holds a relatively unimportant job, can talk to a man with a better position. [Big Book, page 146, line 22]
 71. If he is, and is still trying to **recover**, he will tell you about it even if it means the loss of his job. [Big Book, page 146, line 29]
 72. He will appreciate knowing you are not bothering your head about him, that you are not suspicious nor are you trying to run his life so he will be shielded from temptation to drink. If he is conscientiously following the program of **recovery** he can go anywhere your business may call him. [Big Book, page 147, line 4]

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73. The right kind of man, the kind who **recovers**, will not want this sort of thing. He will not impose. [Big Book, page 149, line 29]
74. The age of miracles is still with us. Our own **recovery** proves that! [Big Book, page 153, line 14]
75. He has helped other men **recover**, and is a power in the church from which he was long absent. [Big Book, page 158, line 25]
76. Understanding our work, he can do this with an eye to selecting those who are willing and able to **recover** on a spiritual basis. [Big Book, page 162, line 13]
77. When a few men in this city have found themselves, and have discovered the joy of helping others to face life again, there will be no stopping until everyone in that town has had his opportunity to **recover**—if he can and will. [Big Book, Page , line]
78. *1) Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.* [Big Book, page 564, line 2]
79. The terms "spiritual experience: and "spiritual awakening" are used many times in this book which, upon careful reading, shows that the personality change sufficient to bring about **recovery** from alcoholism has manifested itself among us in many different forms. [Big Book, page 569, line 4]
80. Though it was not our intention to create such an impression, many alcoholics have nevertheless concluded that in order to **recover** they must acquire an immediate and overwhelming "God consciousness" followed at once by a vast change in feeling and outlook. [Big Book, page 569, line 14]
81. 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. [Big Book, page 570, line 8]
82. Willingness, honesty and open mindedness are the essentials of **recovery**. But these are indispensable. [Big Book, page 570, line 13]

Recovery Quotes

- The five most essential words for a healthy, vital relationship: "I apologize" and "You are right."
- Good Sex should involve laughter. Because think about it, it is funny.
- When you make a mistake, make amends immediately. It's easier to eat crow while it's still warm.
- If you woke up breathing, congratulations! You have another chance!
- Courage is fear in action.
- Attitudes are contagious – is yours worth catching.
- KEEP YOUR SOBRIETY FIRST TO MAKE IT LAST.
- Life is what happens while you're making other plans.

- Courage is mastery of fear – not absence of fear.
- Forgiveness is giving up the hope of a better past.
- Remember... Always forgive your enemies, nothing annoys them as much.
- Failure isn't in falling down, it's in failing to get back up.
- We are continually faced with a series of great opportunities brilliantly disguised as insoluble problems.
- Only an open mind can be healed.
- We do not fail, who? they give up trying.
- Every misery I miss is a new blessing.
- A clean conscience makes a soft pillow.
- Coincidence is when God chooses to remain anonymous
- SPONSORS: Have One...Use One...Be One.
- Jumping to conclusions is a bad exercise.
- People are lonely because they build walls instead of bridges.
- Surrender is a process not an event.
- Spirituality has as much to do with religion as honesty has to do with the truth.
- With an Attitude of Gratitude – It's Impossible to get Drunk.
- Resentments are like peeing your pants; nobody feels it but you.
- Death is not the greatest loss in life. The greatest loss is what dies inside us while we live.

"A Measure of Humility"

In every case, pain had been the price of admission into a new life. But this admission price had purchased more than we expected. It brought a measure of humility, which we soon discovered to be a healer of pain.

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, p. 75

It was painful to give up trying to control my life, even though success eluded me, and when life got too rough, I drank to escape. Accepting life on life's terms will be mastered through the humility I experience when I turn my will and my life over to the care of God, as I understand Him. With my life in God's care, fear, uncertainty, and anger are no longer my response to those portions of life that I would rather not have happen to me. The pain of living through these times will be healed by the knowledge that I have received the spiritual strength to survive.

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Remember hitting your bottom? Do you remember that moment when you first began to feel some hope? Looking back can you remember those angels who appeared at that precise moment when you needed help the most? I can.

I can also remember the abject fear of, "How am I going to pay for this?" No insurance, no real savings, no trust fund, no golden benefactor. Scared, having hit my bottom, finally able to ask for help. I was in a safe place. The rest would just have to take care of itself.

Treatment costs money, real money. Programs, therapies, prescriptions, food, housing, and all the while life continues to go on outside without us. As active members of the Ridgeview Alumni Association our fund raising goal is an endowment fund that will one day be able to help financially that person currently in treatment. Whether it's more time in treatment, another couple of days in a halfway house, medications, daycare so the patient can make it to the program that week, the needs can be overwhelming at times. We all know how powerful a helping hand at that critical moment can make or break a spirit.

Our goal for the Endowment Fund has to be set high if we are to be able to generate any kind of meaningful income. To date we have raised \$25,000 towards our first \$500,000. Every single dollar raised goes into an asset management account over which the Alumni Steering Committee has sole control.

When the day comes, and it will, that we are in a financial position to begin offering grants to patients, a review committee will be established. This group will be comprised of active Steering Committee members who have demonstrated a record of service, and a representative from the hospital. The committee will review the requests and make grants based on need, the patient's participation in their own recovery and the patient's treatment team's input.

Obviously we are a ways down the road from making any grants. The next several years are about increasing awareness of our project, raising and investing the donations that come our way. Today, you can make a difference in the life of that person who is still out there.

Won't you make a commitment to be someone's angel, just for today? We have.

Ridgeview Alumni Association Endowment Fund Campaign

- Yes**, I want to contribute to the Alumni Endowment Fund. I've been in Recovery _____ years and would like to give back \$_____.
- Yes**, I am not an Alumni; however, I wish to contribute to the Endowment Fund. As a family member, friend, business owner or corporate representative/sponsor. Here is my donation of \$_____.

Name _____ Phone (_____) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

The Ridgeview Alumni Association is a non-profit organization and all contributions are tax deductible.

Make checks payable to: Ridgeview Alumni Association Endowment Fund

Mail to: Ridgeview Alumni Steering Committee, 3995 South Cobb Drive, Smyrna, Ga. 30080-6397.

Serenity Garden - Memorial Brick Order Form

Name _____ Phone (_____) _____

Message to be engraved on brick: (2 lines / 14 characters per line)

(Line 1) _____

(Line 2) _____

\$25.00 per brick

* Please fill out name and contact number, even if you wish this to be an anonymous contribution, so we may contact you in case any questions arise about the inscription.

The Ridgeview Alumni Association is a non-profit organization and all contributions are tax deductible.

Make checks payable to: Ridgeview Alumni Association, Bricks

Mail to: Ridgeview Alumni Steering Committee, 3995 South Cobb Drive, Smyrna, Ga. 30080-6397

Summer Focus: Recovery – The Path to Success