



Napa Valley Intergroup Newsletter

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Driving Under The Influence

Can I say that those words elicit a feeling of “ OH Crap” within almost everybody who is reading this? Personally I drove under the influence hundreds of times but only twice did I actually get a free county supplied breakfast. Actually it wasn't really free and sure didn't taste good.

Just incase you have not been to Drunk Driving school lately... It is illegal to drive with a blood alcohol content of .08 or higher. The reason for this is, an average of 37,000 DUI traffic related accidents in California each year! Resulting in 1,400 deaths,(that is 4 innocent men, women and children killed each day) an additional 22,000 injuries and \$650 million dollars worth of physical and personal damage.

If you get pulled over with a .08 or higher BAC, (or test positive for “ other drugs”) this is a misdemeanor crime and first timers can receive, a glorious night at the cross bar hotel complete with free breakfast, drunk driving school for 3-9 months , (which cost approx \$650,) there is also a \$1500 fine, and community service (picking up trash on the Highway Sat and Sun 8 hours per day), attorneys fees, and impound and towing fees and probation. Arrests with priors, significantly increase jail and fines.

If you are arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol or other drugs and cause an injury or death you are likely charged with a felony. Which can result in county jail and up to 5 years in state prison.

The penalty for vehicular manslaughter while under the influence of alcohol or other drugs can be, 15 years to life in state prison.

This is life altering serious stuff. I was arrested twice for DUI, thank God I didn't kill myself or anyone else. I did not enjoy my jailhouse experience or any of the other BS the courts made me do. I used to drive looking over my shoulder constantly, whenever a police car was behind me I was near panic. Since I have been sober I have not even been stopped.

The one good thing that came out of this, is, I was forced to attend AA meetings, and for the first time in my life confront my drinking and drugging issues. It took me awhile but eventually I got the message.

I drive my car approx 25,000 miles per year. I drive by myself and with my wife and my children and their friends. I pray to God that I never again put myself, or the people I care about or anyone else who happens to be on the roads when I am, at risk of becoming a statistic.

**This Newsletter is also available on our website
<http://www.AANapa.org>**

**Archives of previous issues are also available. The website also
contains current meeting and announcement information.**

Overcoming Negative Thinking!!!!

I don't know about you, but from time to time, I have had negative thoughts. Negative thoughts about myself, about my life about the choices and decisions I have made, about how truly great and wonderful my life should or could have been if I hadn't dropped out of school, did drugs and alcohol for 30 years and went to jail. If only I had not screwed everything up completely I would be living the life I always dreamed, right now, and more importantly not feel these feeling of guilt and remorse and anger.

So, what then can I do?? Well my first thought is to do what I have done for 30 years, a sick combination of running from myself and avoiding dealing with my stuff, honestly. So the pattern looked like this, I would begin to feel bad about some or all of the decisions I made in my life, I would then feel depressed that it was too late to undo the past and "start over" and since everything I had done so far turned out so shitty, why even bother to get motivated to try anything new and positive because it was naturally doomed from the onset. If I didn't screw it up personally, my destiny to be a F**k Up would overtake anything positive in my life. So why even start!! Poor me, poor me..... yes pour me another drink.

Looking back I didn't really enjoy the "Pity Pot" but it was comfortable and I spent a Hellofa lot a time there. It wasn't my problems that got me to AA it was my brilliant solution to my problems. I had to learn that my "solution" to my problems was much worse than my problems and it was actually making my problems worse. At first I drank to give me courage, ultimately it gave me fear, at first I drank to rest and relax. Ultimately it made me sleepless and anxious.

So the first thing that I had to fix was, my best thinking, my solution, which was no solution at all. It was only once I got clean and sober that I could really begin to find ways to EFFECTIVLY deal with the good the bad and the ugly parts of my life and my thinking and my efforts and my future.

Some of the things that I have learned are My actions have a direct impact on my thoughts. My thoughts have a direct impact on my emotions, (and being and emotional person) My emotions have a direct impact on my future actions. Ah Ha!!! So therefore if I act (live) and think in a positive way it will flow to my emotions and I will feel good about myself and after all isn't that what the whole AA thing is about, having me feeling good about, me. Not exactly, but it is a big part of the puzzle.

On those occasions when I am doing everything I can right and life is still being life on its terms and not mine and on its schedule and not mine and not treating me very well. I have learned that in addition to having control over my actions I have control over my thoughts!!!!!!!!!!!!!! And that is HUGE!! Yes I have the ability to use the tools of the program and re think and re focus my mental energies. Turning lemons into (mental) lemonade.

How do I do this you might ask? Well I will share with you some of the tools that I have learned to use.

If you have ever suffered from migraine headaches or know someone who does, there are medicines available, but for them to work, you must catch the headache right at the beginning. This has two positive effects first it stops the migraine from becoming much worse and allows the meds to work, but it also helps to break the cycle of headaches. Overcoming negative thinking works in the same way.

The first thing that I do is recognize immediately when I am starting to go on a pity pot picnic, and after I congratulate myself for recognizing it, I stop the picnic immediately. Break the cycle. The way I do that is, after I recognize that it is happening, after I have congratulated myself for recognizing it, I go to my happy place, really I do. One of the things I love to do is hit a perfect golf ball. So when I am wallowing in negative thoughts just for the feeling it gives me, I stop it , and plant myself mentally right on the 16th tee at Somerset Isles, and mentally drive the perfect drive right over the water onto the green, and yes I really did do that once. Laugh if you want but it works for me, though not sure if it

improves my game any.

Next I ask myself what is happening in my life that I can feel good about?? For me there is much to feel good about today, I feel good about my recovery and my commitment to my program, I feel good about my marriage, my relationship with my children, my ability to cook, play guitar, and golf, and the fact that I ordered a book 3 weeks ago and I actually paid for it and read it.

Finally I go to program, I “ accept the things I cannot change and try my best to change the things I can”

By ferreting out the negative and self defeating thoughts and things that we tell ourselves every day and replacing them with a new positive and progressive statements on who we are today and where we plan to be tomorrow we can help direct our thoughts and feelings about ourselves and thereby our actions. Those positive actions then continue to support our positive feelings of self. Like I said isn't his whole thing about me feeling good about me?? Oh Yeah!!

Events

Note: Some events are listed for the sake of sociability only, and may not be officially sponsored A.A. functions. In keeping with Tradition Six we do not endorse or lend the A.A. name to related facilities or outside enterprises.

March

March 21-23 - NCCAA - Fresno.

April

April 5-6 - Area 06 (CNCA) Pre-Conference Assembly - Vallejo. This assembly precedes the General Service Conference in New York.

April 27 - May 3 - General Service Conference - New York.

May

May 17 - Area 06 (CNCA) Post Confer-

ence Assembly - Cloverdale. This assembly is the follow-up to the General Service Conference in New York.

June

June 7 - Unity Day. AA members and their families are invited to attend the 2003 Unity Day. Unity Day is sponsored by General Services of Napa Valley. There will be speakers from GSO discussing Third Legacy (service) in AA. Newcomers are especially welcome. Look for flyers and info at the Alano Club and at your home group

August

August 1-2 - Napa Valley Intergroup Annual Campout. For further details call Michele P. at 226-1248

August 2 - Area 06 (CNCA) Summer Assembly - Palo Alto.

October

October 3-5 - NCCAA - Redding. Please attend the General Service Meeting or ask your Group's GSR for further details.

October 25 - Napa Valley Intergroup Anniversary Party - Yountville. This annual event includes a speaker meeting, dinner, dance and raffle. Costumes are optional and child care is provided. Volunteers are needed for this event to help set up and clean up and to serve on various committees. We are looking both for individual volunteers and whole AA meetings to volunteer their time for this event. To volunteer or for further information about the event please call Larry B. at 226-6354.

November

November 1 - Area 06 (CNCA) Fall Assembly Calistoga. Assembly will be held at the Napa Valley Fairgrounds.

For further information about Area 06 (CNCA) events, please attend the General Service Meeting on the first Saturday of each month at the Veterans Home in Yountville, or ask your Group's GSR.

Your story could be here.

Words of Wisdom

“ What Lies behind us and before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us.”

- *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

“ I am an old man and have know many troubles but most of them never happened.”

- *Mark Twain*

“It would be tragic for you to fail to recognize you very own self because you had your head so far up your darkest regions that you missed the unveiling.”

- *Dr. Phil*

“ Don’t forget your primary purpose and get you ass back to work”

- *My Sponsor*

How will I know if I’ve really hit my bottom? I asked at my home group. “ When you stop digging“, they told me. The bottom is only the bottom until we find AA. The day we begin working the Steps , the bottom becomes the foundation. By taking action and following the program, we begin to build our lives again.

- *Bob G - Chelsea, Michigan*

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