



Awareness Window

Fall 2014

A newsletter for those in recovery and their families

In This Issue

- Points to Ponder: Step Nine—Willing to Make Amendspage 1
- In Loving Memorypage 2
- A Thank-You Note from Elsapage 2
- Wisdom from Lutherpage 2
- Family Roles Caused by Addictionpage 3
- Meeting Schedulepage 4
- Fall Poetrypage 4

Points to Ponder: Step Nine—Willing to Make Amends

Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

"Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift." —Matthew 5:23

Step Nine asks us to make direct amends to those we have harmed. As we discussed earlier in Step Eight, we have sinned against our brother by our meaningless apologies. Now we have to SHOW that we mean it. Christ showed us his love when he gave up his heavenly home; took on a corporeal body; lived in this world; was mocked, belittled, beaten, and abused; and died on a cross. Those were all actions that he did for us. His actions matched his words. When using or drinking, our actions did not match our words. Now is the time to change that. The book *Alcoholics Anonymous* points out the promises of recovery. In the explanation of Step Nine: "If we are painstaking about this phase of our development," it says, "we will be amazed before we are halfway through. We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness. We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. We will comprehend the word *serenity* and we will know peace."

One way to express this is through the following short story. There was an alcoholic who promised his mother that he would go to church with her every Sunday. On Saturday nights, he would drink himself to oblivion. Sunday mornings would come, and at times he was passed out or too hung over to make it to church. Later on when he sobered up, he apologized and promised that it would not happen again. This stopped being a true apology, but rather a vicious cycle that diminished the truth every time it was spoken. Finally, he got into recovery. Now every Sunday morning he arrives early to pick up his mother and takes her to church. After church, he takes her out for breakfast, and they share their thoughts and feelings and connect emotionally. He brings her home and thanks her for going with him to church. Now instead of feeling alarm, guilt, shame, nervousness, or apprehension about seeing his mother, he can gladly see her, and she in return is happy to see her sober son. Most importantly, being in church each Sunday has enriched him spiritually and strengthens him to continue working on his recovery as his faith in Christ Jesus increases.

Please share your story or materials you find helpful in your walk of recovery.

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In Loving Memory

Friends, the Lord our God called home Michael, the husband of Colleen. Michael passed away after a battle with cancer. We wish Colleen and her children God's comfort.

We pray (1 Corinthians 15:55-57): Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us (me!) the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen!

God, please grant Colleen and her family as well as all believers the peace and comfort we have in your promises of life everlasting. Through faith in Christ, may we be comforted that we will see our loved ones again who have passed before us. Lord God, thank you for the victory that is ours through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

A Thank-You Note from Elsa

Thank you, and God's richest blessings to so many of you A&DA readers and Retreat attenders for the prayers, cards, and visits following my heart by-pass surgery. Thank you also to those who had Colleen be your messenger with a get-well gift. Her visit got me up to date on this year's Retreat 2014. God has been gracious to me, allowing for healing and returning energy. Perhaps the greatest gift is accepting the need to be patient. God's blessings to you all for a wonderful fall and God's continued strength as we walk together on the pathway to recovery. Lots of love, Elsa

Wisdom from Luther

Welcome to a new section we are adding to the Awareness Window Newsletter, Wisdom from Luther. We are all Lutherans, not simply because of Martin Luther, but because God in His wisdom used the strengths He gave Martin Luther to stand up and challenge the errors within His church. So we are called "Lutherans" as a testament to a man God used. Luther has some interesting quotes that we will use to help us in gaining an understanding of how our sins, in the light of addiction, are forgiven and help us all move forward in our lives, free from the guilt of our sin that we left at the cross. Please e-mail Jeff Richardson at jrichardson@wlcfs.org with your comments. Our prayer is that we reach a new awareness that can come within each of us as we focus our lives on Christ.

"Faith is a living, daring confidence in God's grace, so sure and certain that a man could stake his life on it a thousand times." —Martin Luther

Faith is alive! It grows, it develops, it changes as we are fed spiritually, whether going to church on Sundays or reading our Bibles or *Meditations*. Christ lived and died to save us all. He is the bedrock of our salvation. We need not fear anything because Christ is for us—who can stand against us? We can boldly and confidently bring all our sins to Christ, even the ones we commit under addiction, knowing full well that we are forgiven. The only problem is when our sinful nature doesn't allow us to forgive ourselves. Jesus offers a solution for that, too.

Family Roles Caused by Addiction

This article is written by Jeff Richardson, a counselor with WLCFS Christian Family Counseling. He specializes in substance abuse disorders.

In our last article we discussed family roles and how they are seen or evidenced in family life. We can clearly see how addiction impacts the family in negative ways and how these behaviors can cause the family to maintain a dysfunctional path. Utilizing family counseling and also individual counseling will best assist the family in the change process. When everyone is working toward a family goal of proper communication as well as gaining an understanding of feelings and how those feelings impact behaviors, it is a very important step in rebuilding the family's structure. If these roles and the dysfunction caused by the substance abuser are not addressed, it can lead to serious problems for the children. This article will help to learn ways to counter negative behaviors.

The **Chief Enabler** can break the cycle of caretaking and begin to focus on him/herself by receiving counseling as well as attending 12-step meetings like Co-Dependents Anonymous and Al-Anon. This chief enabler role is connected to the co-dependent behaviors. The chief enabler would benefit from identifying what issues there are in regard to control, self-esteem, and insecurities. It would also be a benefit in teaching proper parenting techniques. These will also help facilitate changing behaviors.

The way to help create change for the **Family Hero** requires that they receive validation when they are not achieving. It is good to help them see that it is who they are and not what they do that is important. Reinforcing that it is OK to not be perfect is very helpful. Curbing their behavior by not permitting them to dominate conversations is a good way to counter this role. Finally, help this family member realize that it is not always important to be first.

To assist the family member in the **Scapegoat** role, it is important to understand that this role causes the individuals to try redeeming themselves to family. They often hope that they can be loved, respected, and appreciated for who they are. They can suffer from negative thoughts and feelings of not being good enough, and will seek ways of trying to please others. Unfortunately, sometimes the scapegoat role causes them to be the "bad one" because to them it seems they are always labeled bad, and they rebel in anger. Offering support, showing love, and giving positive reinforcement will help this family member to grow.

The **Lost Child's** role requires individual attention. Remember that the lost child has learned to be self-reliant and introverted. Talking to them about their personal interests can help pull the individual back in touch with others. Offering a gentle touch, including them in groups, and working with others are great ways to help them be a part of a larger unit. Allow the lost child to talk for him/herself instead of talking for them. Don't let the individual remain silent or stay in the background.

Finally, we focus on the role of the **Mascot**. A way to help mascots change their behavior is to help them see how their behaviors can be inappropriate. Give examples of how their actions cause disruption for others or for themselves. Providing positive reinforcement for their positive and/or responsible behaviors is helpful in making and sustaining change.

These roles are not the "be all and end all" of family roles. There are many different concepts and ideas that go into these roles. Some believe there may be more roles than these. Others argue over all outcomes of each role as well as how they function in life. Regardless, it still is best to consult with a mental health expert who is trained in family therapy and ask for their assistance. The safety of the children and spouse is paramount. If substance use is still happening in the family, it must be addressed first. Once stability is in place, it will be easier to address these struggles.

If your family seems to take on some of these roles, contact WLCFS Christian Family Counseling at 800.438.1772 to see how to help the entire family cope with the effects of addiction.

A&DA Meetings

	When	Where	Contact
Sunday	7:00 p.m.	St. Paul's Lutheran*	Onalaska, WI (608) 783-2552
Monday	6:30 p.m.	The Gardens of Hartford	Hartford, WI (262) 224-0483
	7:00 p.m.	Mt. Zion Lutheran**	Missoula, MT (406) 490-9345
	7:00 p.m.	Mt. Lebanon Lutheran	Milwaukee, WI (414) 461-1563
Tuesday	7:00 p.m.	St. Mark's Lutheran	Watertown, WI (920) 262-8500
	Call for times	Ascension Lutheran	Harrisburg, PA (717) 319-5424
Thursday	7:00 p.m.	Living Hope Lutheran	Midlothian, VA (804) 464-1424 (Roxanne) (804) 744-8869 (Church)
	8:00 p.m.	Bethany Lutheran	Manitowoc, WI (920) 684-9620
Friday	5:30 p.m.	Salem Lutheran (East Side)	Milwaukee, WI (414) 964-7036
	7:30 p.m.	Mt. Olive Lutheran Church*	Appleton, WI (920) 233-0437
Saturday	8:00 p.m.	St. Peter's Lutheran	Fond du Lac, WI (920) 921-8075

*also have Al-Anon meetings—call for details

**please call if interested in attending

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A.A.'s Step Nine: "Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them and others."

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What Fall Colors Mean to Me

As I look about me and feel cool Fall move in;
I think of my changes and what has happened within.

Red makes me think of the change Christ's blood brought me;
Reminds me in Christ Jesus, I'm free.

The shimmering gold/yellow that shines on a tree
Makes me think of the glory of God I will see.

The orange brings joy and bright sunshine,
Reminding me that God's SON, the Savior, is mine.

The leaves drifting peacefully, gracefully to the ground
Make me think of the peace and grace in Jesus I've found.

God's glory shines forth in the beauty all around me.
Although I fell, God picked me up and his love now I see.