



Awareness Window

A newsletter for those in recovery and their families

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Points to Ponder: Step Four—Search

Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

We understand this to mean:

We make a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves—both our strengths and our weaknesses.

Psalm 119:59: "I have considered my ways and have turned my steps to your statutes."

As we take a moral inventory of ourselves, searching for weaknesses and strengths, we look at our life either God's way—or our way. Throughout our history, this seems to be the struggle that we have both inside and outside.

Our way: selfish, ME first, What about ME? What's in it for ME? I'll love you "if" you fill MY needs first. We focus on immediate, temporal, and worldly pleasures and material objects. Our self-centered thinking is by nature in opposition to God's way.

God's way: sacrificial, always loving, always for us, always wanting the best for us even unto death, and eternal life for us.

As we make our inventory and consider our ways, it is not easy to admit our weaknesses and failures. Yet as God's children, and only with God's help, we can see our strengths and our strength in the Lord. Some call God "the Higher Power," but better yet, call him who he is—Jesus Christ, our Savior.

As we consider our ways, turning to God's Word and with the help of the Holy Spirit, each day we turn around to follow Jesus' path in recovery: "Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow *in his steps*" (1 Peter 2:21b).

Prayer: Dear heavenly Father, forgive my efforts to "do it my way," which leads to sin. Help me honestly look at my weaknesses that they do not become barriers to recovery. Fill my heart and mind with your grace and mercy that in your power I might follow in your steps. Thank you. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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

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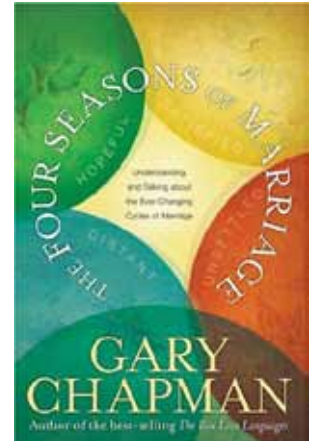


It WORKS If You WORK IT

As you reflect on the changes that have occurred in your life, the support of family, friends, and information gained through many sources help us on our walk. I have found that reading on specific topics can be helpful.

Two writers have become well-known for their writings in the areas of relationships and recovery. I have come to enjoy suggestions and ideas they share in their books. The writers are Gary Chapman and Mark Laaser. Below are quotes from two of their books. You might consider reading the books in their entirety: *The Four Seasons of Marriage* (Gary Chapman—Author of *The Five Love Languages*) and *The Seven Desires of Every Heart* (Mark & Debra Laaser, author of *Healing the Wounds of Sexual Addiction*).

Gary Chapman says, “My experience, both in my own marriage and in counseling couples for more than thirty years, suggests that marriages are perpetually in a state of transition, continually moving from one season to another—perhaps not annually, as in nature, but just as certainly and consistently. Sometimes we find ourselves in winter—discouraged, detached, and dissatisfied; other times we experience springtime, with its openness, hope, and anticipation. On still other occasions we bask in the warmth of summer—comfortable, relaxed, and enjoying life. And then comes fall with its uncertainty, negligence, and apprehension. The cycle repeats itself many times throughout the life of a marriage, just as the seasons repeat themselves in nature” (p. XII). When the going gets rough in your relationship, don’t give up.



Mark and Debra Laaser write, “We believe that God created us with seven basic, universal desires. Each of us desires to be heard and understood, to be affirmed, to be blessed, to be safe, to be touched, to be chosen and to be included. Having and fulfilling these desires validates our very existence. If these basic desires are fulfilled, we will enjoy a deeper and richer relationship with God and with others” (taken from overview of book).

Take time in your busy lives to read, pray, and talk with others. Develop a Christian support network. Take time to build your relationships. It does work if you work it.

Goodbye—Auf Wiedersehen—Until we meet again, STEVE.

Steve and Ruth have been long-time friends and supporters of our A&DA family. Their loving, energetic support has enriched both the planning and implementing of our program and our annual retreats. We will miss Steve’s welcoming spirit, genuine concern, and hearty hugs.

On June 5, 2013, our Lord Jesus called Steve into complete recovery by taking him home to heaven. Steve had fought a lung disease for several weeks. Our Savior did what medical science could not do, and that is make Steve completely well.

We keep Ruth and the entire Hahnke family in our prayers as they move forward in their Christian lives. We wish them comfort, strength, and the willingness to accept God’s will as we leave all things to God’s direction and trust in Him one day at a time.



This article by Jeff Richardson, CSAC, is the second in a series of articles addressing the issues of teenage drug use. Part 1 looked at teens and alcohol; Part 2 will cover inhalants, marijuana, & designer drugs; and Part 3 will look at other drugs, such as prescription drugs and "hard core" drugs.

Teenage Drug Use

Inhalants are common household products that can be huffed, or breathed in. These include aerosols such as paint, deodorants, and hairspray; gases, such as nitrous oxide from whipping cream cans; nitrates; and volatile solvents, like gas or glue. Inhalants are used primarily by 12- to 17-year-olds. Huffing can lead to permanent brain damage, and damage to the heart, lungs, and liver. Death is also a dangerous possible outcome of its use.



Marijuana is a familiar drug that is probably the most common drug after alcohol. There are at least 426 known compounds that make up marijuana. The one we are going to look at is THC, which is the primary ingredient. It also is used to determine how potent it is. Contemporary marijuana is not the same marijuana that was smoked so prevalently in the 1960s. The THC concentration in the '60s marijuana was less than .2%. Botanists have now learned to manipulate many plants to make them larger and tastier, and unfortunately marijuana is also one of them. Today, THC concentration can be up to 18%, which is 25-40 times more potent than it was 40 some years ago. Health impact is highly debatable; however, some of the known facts are that the effects on the respiratory system of a single joint is equal to smoking 15 cigarettes, and marijuana also contains chemicals that have been linked to causing cancer.

In 1914, a combination of amphetamine and mescaline was mixed to create the drug MDMA. **Designer drugs** such as MDMA are synthetic products that are manufactured to produce greater effects. MDMA/ Ecstasy is both a hallucinogenic and a stimulant drug, which makes the user experience a flood of euphoria (a high) and makes someone's feelings much more intense and empathetic, whether they're positive or negative. The drug's effects usually last up to 6 hours. Designer drugs are similar to illegal street drugs in regard to their chemical formula and psychoactive effects. Street chemists initially began making these drugs in the 1960s. Current types of designer drugs are MDMA, Ecstasy, and MDA, and many have their own form of dangers that can affect the body's ability to control its temperature. It also causes an increase to the heart rate and blood pressure of the user. Ecstasy is also made up from MDMA, but Ecstasy can contain a number of other drugs or combinations of them that can be harmful and can kill. Simply put, MDMA/Ecstasy is made up secretly and illegally, without any regulations or standards, and lacks any quality controls. It is mixed and sold to whoever wants it.

In the next issue: K2, Spice, pharmacy drugs such as Ritalin, and the rest of the "hard core" drugs

I Was Jesus' Little Lamb by LLS

When I was just a little child
My Jesus was my friend.
I oft imagined me with Him
And He was there with me.

He was the Shepherd of the sheep
And sandals clad His holy feet
While I was an apprentice
With my feet upon the grass.

I never looked upon His face
But I loved it nonetheless.
I was content to sit beside Him
And I waited as He watched.

He wore a simple robe of white
And when I needed peace of mind
Or comfort from my fright
I'd lay my head upon His lap
And He would give me rest.

With His hand upon my head
He soothed away my senseless dread.
Now that I am older
I've seen that it is true:
When you sit at Jesus' feet
He's always there by you!



Retreat 2013 Memories

The 29th A&DA Retreat is now a thing of the past. We had a great time. Our attendance was a little lower than usual with 25 participants, but that didn't damper the fellowship and energy of the Retreat. The warm weather was beautiful, which afforded many of us the opportunity to enjoy the Retreat grounds. We saw deer grazing near the edge of the wooded area. Since this was migration time, we were able to see the beautiful white swans swimming in the Fox River.

We were challenged to let go of our past knowing complete forgiveness in Christ. Pastor Henke cleverly used Scrooge's Christmas Past to help us look at our past. Sheryl Cowling really helped many of us to see that emotional healing is found in Christ. We need to look at our feelings, not bury them. Our Retreat concluded with Pastor Ehlers showing that our "fraction-self" need not be divided, but we are whole through our Lord Jesus.

The fellowship and encouragement that the Retreat provides certainly is the best part. As one participant stated, "The Retreat is the shot in the arm that keeps me going for another year."

A&DA Meetings

	<i>When</i>	<i>Where</i>		<i>Contact</i>
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) 510-1143
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	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
	7:00 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

©2013 Awareness Window is a free newsletter published quarterly by the Appleton office of WLCFS-Christian Family Solutions.
 Editor: Elsa Manthey ~ Design & Copyedit: Ann Jahns

A.A.'s Step Four: "Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves."

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