



Awareness Window

A newsletter for those in recovery and their families

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

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Points to Ponder:

Step Twelve—REACHING OUT

Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

“...we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.” Acts 4:20

In the one sense, a spiritual awakening can refer to “coming alive to live a life without alcohol,” and our zest and spirit for life has been renewed. Perhaps this is what is meant in the AA Twelfth Step. However, in our Al-Aware groups, we pray that the spiritual awakening that is accomplished is greater than this. Since we strive to identify and share the message of our Triune God (our higher Power) at our meetings, through the blessing of the Holy Spirit working through the Word, true spiritual awakening is accomplished.

Through our personal daily devotions, the Holy Spirit continues to strengthen our faith. Our injured spirits are refreshed.

I remember a young man, new to recovery, who told me a big change in his life in recovery was how he spent his noon hour work break. He showed me his well-worn recovery Bible. He said he sits in his truck and reads his Scripture and devotion every day. This accomplished two things: It renewed his spirit, keeping him close to the Lord, and it kept him away from talk that led to nights out drinking and the beer that was in the cooler for everyone to share.

Our awakening does mean a new life. A new life in Christ where we look to God rather than the bottle for that “good feeling.” A new life where we speak of family, friends or projects rather than our night out, and the fun things we did and felt.

In our recovery, we can’t help but direct others on their road to recovery. We can’t help but share how God brings a new focus to our life. Another man in recovery told me that recovery means knowing God differently. He always believed in God but really didn’t feel part of the family of God. Now he really shares his love and thankfulness for his Savior. He can’t help but enthusiastically talk about being a son of God.

Prayer: *Dear Father in heaven, thank you for your gift of salvation. Thank you for sending the Holy Spirit to enlighten my heart through your Word. Please use me in your service to carry the message of true recovery to others in need. Help me be an example of forgiveness and love to others around me. I ask this in Jesus’ name. Amen.*

Alcoholic Weapons

Living in the home of an alcoholic has been described by some family members as living in a war zone. The sights and sounds of this war zone might look like this:

The alcoholic drinks and drinks, again and again...

Family members—spouse, parent, child—plead, pray, threaten, cry or use the silent treatment.

Family members shield, cover up and/or protect the alcoholic from the consequences of the drinking or embarrassment of others finding out. The alcoholic generally continues to act like “a little god” because the family doesn’t know how to oppose, or is inadequate at opposing, the behavior.

What are weapons of the alcoholic?

The ability to arouse anger or provoke loss of temper.

If the family members respond in anger, they have given the alcoholic power.

The ability to arouse anxiety on the part of the family.

Out of anxiety, the family feels they have to do what really must be done by the alcoholic in order for him/her to heal. As the anxiety of the family member increases and thoughts of “What will (they) say?” take over, the alcoholic’s behavior is covered up. (This might be damaged property repaired, bad check covered, or apologies made.) The alcoholic learns that he/she won’t have to suffer the consequences of his/her actions.

Ignorance both of alcoholism itself and resources for help.

Since use of alcohol has been an active part of many family cultures, the understanding of what alcohol use and dependency is has long been misunderstood. “What will people say?” has become the defensive phrase without acknowledging what people are already saying!

The weapons must be avoided by family. When not avoided, the family contributes to the progression of the alcoholic behavior. Family members can seek help and set boundaries. The medical field, legal field and employee assistance programs are available for recovery assistance along with Al-Anon*, Celebrate Recovery and Christian recovery programs like our Alcohol & Drug Awareness Program. Even if the alcoholic doesn’t seek help, the spouse and family members can.

*learn more about Al-Anon on page 4

THE WONDERS OF HIS MIGHT

*To show the wonders of his might
How can I presume to write?
My mind can't even climb the height
And if it could, how tell aright?*

*My soul can't help but sing and pray
Of all His treasures seen each day
With words that my own mouth expresses
As His Word to me addresses.*

*With all my utmost grasp of speech
I can never hope to reach
What He all-knowingly has wrought.*

*The span of His almighty power
Cannot be seen or felt or thought,
But by His Spirit in this hour
His essence in the Word is caught.*



*He gave me all the good I see,
From all the evil I'm set free;
And yet the good is but a taste—
The best we see will be abased
When with His glory we are faced.*

*To show the wonders of His might
Will be the joy of heaven's height!*

LLS



Photos of the grounds of Monte Alverno in the spring, courtesy of a retreat participant.



Retreat 2012



The 2012 “Stinkin’ Thinkin’ ” retreat was an enjoyable event. The retreat welcomed a lot of new faces. They told me they felt they were welcomed into the recovery family with love and friendship. It was great to see many of the long-timers, too.

Pastor Phil helped us straighten out our thinking with the guidance and support of God’s Word. Many of us were glad to be able to spend some time after lunch discussing our reactions to his presentation. Pastor Dean in the Sunday service encouraged us in our recovery walk to focus our thoughts on God’s continuing love. Thank you to both of these special servants for sharing God’s Word with us.

Saturday afternoon found some of us watching the movie *Courageous*. The viewers felt the movie gave them a lot of food for thought and helped them appreciate the importance of the role of a father in the home.

Fellowship time on Saturday evening was filled with laughter and dramatics. It was a wonderful time to relax and get to know each other much better. Thank you, Sandy and Ruth, for arranging it.

I personally would like to have this group in my church choir. Our call to order for each session was singing favorite hymns. Several people had let me know hymns that were special to them, and these hymns were correlated with one of the Twelve Steps.

Monte Alverno truly is a quiet place. One attendee said, “No radio, no TV, so I am truly relaxed, renewed and refreshed.” We pray that the Retreat experience helped to bring each person’s thinkin’ into clear awareness.

We hope to see you at Retreat 2013, at Monte Alverno on April 26-28, 2013!

~Elsa

Have You Attended Al-Anon?

Many times an alcoholic is directed to attend Alcoholics Anonymous as part of his/her recovery program. Many do attend and are helped on their pathway of recovering. When Bob and Dick started AA, they did not plan the program's counterpart, which today is known as Al-Anon.

Over time it became obvious that an alcoholic's addiction affects the family, and so a recovery process needed to be offered to spouses and family members of the alcoholic. That is why Al-Anon was developed.

But why don't spouses or family members seek out the help and encouragement of this program?

One reason is that the program isn't well known, and often family members are in the dark about it.

In addition, the attitude is that the alcoholic needs to get help, but the family members are just fine. They don't feel they need to talk about what has gone on. Often, the "stuffed pain" has done damage to family members, while unresolved anger can and does affect relationships.

Stopping the alcohol use is just part of the healing process. If you have not sought out Al-Anon or a counterpart Christian group like Peace in Recovery, please consider doing this.

Bernard Brady writes, "The trauma of the spouse—the terror and feeling trapped—is part and parcel of the sickness within the disease of alcoholism."

Toby Rice Drews is the author of *Getting Them Sober*. Her book is over 30 years old, yet the principles still hold true today. Here are just a few of her suggestions for family members:

Attend at least six Al-Anon meetings.

Try different groups because all are not alike. You will find one with which you identify.

You go to Al-Anon to get yourself well, not your spouse/family member.

For at least 15 minutes today, do something that is pure fun.

Remember that self-respect and self-image are found in knowing your Savior. Stay close to Him.

Some questions and ideas for faster family healing that you might want to address are:

Do I take the blame for his/her drinking?

Do I know how to relax?

Does arguing or reminding him/her of drinking really help?

Should I hide the car keys?

Can I really get help even though he/she is the drunk?

Am I checking the bars?

Is my sense of pride keeping me from getting help?

A&DA Meetings

	<i>When</i>	<i>Where</i>		<i>Contact</i>
Sunday	7:00 p.m.	St. Paul's Lutheran*	Onalaska, WI	(608) 777-6329
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
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