



# Awareness Window

A newsletter for those in recovery and their families

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## Points to Ponder: Step Six—Contrition

We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

*We understand this to mean:*

We become entirely ready to have Christ remove all these defects of character that prevent us from carrying out his will in our lives.

*1 John 3:9: No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in them; they cannot go on sinning, because they have been born of God.*

*Romans 6:5-7: For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—because anyone who has died has been set free from sin.*

**F**rom where does this "readiness for removal of these defects" come? It certainly does not come from our "old self," our sinful nature. Our sinful nature shows itself with sinful desires and behaviors, which we admitted as we worked through Steps Four and Five.

This readiness comes from our "new life in Christ." Our gracious God gives and sustains our faith. Jesus gives us new life through his life, death, and resurrection. Knowing who we are in Christ gives the strength to move forward in our lives.

As we study God's Word, specifically Baptism, we are reminded by Martin Luther that "baptizing with water signifies that the old Adam in us is to be drowned by DAILY contrition and repentance and is to die with all sins and evil lusts; and that again a new man should DAILY come forth and arise who shall live before God in righteousness and purity forever."

Each day we say "no" to the temptation to use, for using would certainly pull us back to our old life. With Christ guiding us we are able to say "yes" to our life of sobriety, which allows us to shed the old reputation and habits we had while using and abusing. We no longer practice sin. We are no longer enslaved by sin. Thanks be to God for the victory we won through him.

*Prayer: How kind of you, my Savior, to come to us on earth. Oh, may we not by sinning despise your lowly birth. We need you, O Lord Jesus, to be our dearest friend. Your love will guard and guide us. Lord, keep us to life's end. Amen. (Christian Worship 48)*

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

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## Are You Taking Care of Yourself?

Most of our Wisconsin winters are cold to VERY cold, and most of us do not get out as much as we do in the summer to engage in activities. Age may have something to do with it—my youngest daughter loves sledding, and my older daughters enjoy the occasional snowball fight. My mother, on the other hand, hates going outside in winter. Regardless of age, we all should work on self-care.

We read in Proverbs 21:31, *“The horse is made ready for the day of battle, but victory rests with the Lord.”* Although we ultimately rely on God for our victories, we have to prepare for each day—which includes self-care. An acronym that I find helpful in self-care is H.A.L.T., which stands for **H**ungry, **A**ngry, **L**onely, **T**ired.

**Hungry.** What thoughts and feelings occur when you are hungry? Hunger is powerful and can cause us to change situations in our life! Do you eat regularly? Our bodies need sustenance, but sometimes we forget or don't eat during troubled times. How many meals have been skipped due to substance abuse? If you are hungry, chances are you are not taking care of yourself.

**Angry.** Anger is a normal emotion. How often do you feel anger? Why? These are some important questions to consider. Anger is a secondary emotion, needing a deeper emotion to be able to exist. Usually there is either sadness or fear at the foundation of anger. If we deal with the deeper emotions, the anger usually disappears. Feeling angry most of the time can mean that you are not dealing with something that bothers you. Anger builds and eventually leads to more problems. God asks us to take it to him in prayer. Talk to someone you trust about your anger. Dealing with the anger allows you to move forward rather than live in the past.

**Lonely.** God told us in Genesis that it was not good for Adam to be alone, so he created Eve. God didn't create us to live as “self-contained units,” but to share our thoughts, feelings, and beliefs with others. If you are alone, why is that? Is it because you have pushed others away or have isolated yourself? If so, why? Being able to trust others and share burdens is a very good way to take care of yourself. It helps to deal with anger or other feelings and either let them go or get help with them.

**Tired.** Perhaps you haven't eaten for awhile and your body is starving for nutrients. Perhaps thoughts, feelings, and anxieties are keeping you up at night. Being tired is also another way of not taking care of yourself. It is imperative that you get sleep. Take it to the Lord in prayer, and he will give you rest. Christ died for all sins, including yours. There is nothing that God has not seen. Therefore, pray to him. He already knows. Then rest so that you are no longer tired.

Getting out of the house and changing up the routine, being with others, and trying something new are all good ways of taking care of yourself. Have fun. So whether you enjoy the cold of winter or abhor it, and whether you are outside having fun or keeping warm in your home, please take care of yourself!

—Article by Jeff Richardson, CSAC



## Message of Winter Snow

Gentle white, dropping from the sky  
Landing softly all around  
Reminds me of God, His promise.

Though your sins be as scarlet red,  
They will be as white as snow.  
Though red like crimson, they will be like wool.

Quietly, I rest secure,  
knowing the darkness of my sin  
is covered by Christ's blood. I'm at peace.

*This article by Jeff Richardson, CSAC, is the last in a series of articles addressing the issues of teenage drug use. Part 1 looked at teens and alcohol; Part 2 covered inhalants, marijuana, & designer drugs; Part 3 looked at stimulants; and this final part will deal with synthetic drugs, knowing if substance abuse is present, and where to turn for help with substance abuse.*

## **Teenage Drug Use**

**Synthetic drugs.** There is now a synthetic form of marijuana (cannabis) that is in circulation. Synthetic cannabinoids have an ingredient very similar to the active ingredient found in marijuana. At the end of 2008, several cannabinoids were found in herbal smoking mixtures that were misleadingly called room deodorizers or incense, or even “plant food.” Some of the names they were given were Spice Gold, Spice Silver, and Yucatan Fire. Soon after, other similar products appeared. They do not contain tobacco or cannabis, but when smoked, produce effects similar to those of cannabis. These products are typically sold via the Internet and in “head shops.” Due to the “newness” of these drugs, there have not been many long-term studies completed. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse it was reported that “Spice users report experiences similar to those produced by marijuana—elevated mood, relaxation, and altered perception—and in some cases the effects are even stronger than those of marijuana. Some users report psychotic effects like extreme anxiety, paranoia, and hallucinations” ([www.drugabuse.gov](http://www.drugabuse.gov)).



**There are other means for getting “high.”** Watch out for your family! If for any reason you suspect something, don’t be afraid to ask about it. Simply asking forces the individual to respond to your inquiry. Then there is the choice of telling the truth or lying. And lying takes effort, planning, and deception. Assessing if there is a problem with substances can be a challenge. Behaviors do change, and some of the “new” or perhaps differences in behavior usually exist. Attitude changes can be the most obvious. It can start small. Perhaps drinking or using when feeling tension can be an indicator as well as seeing an urgency to use.

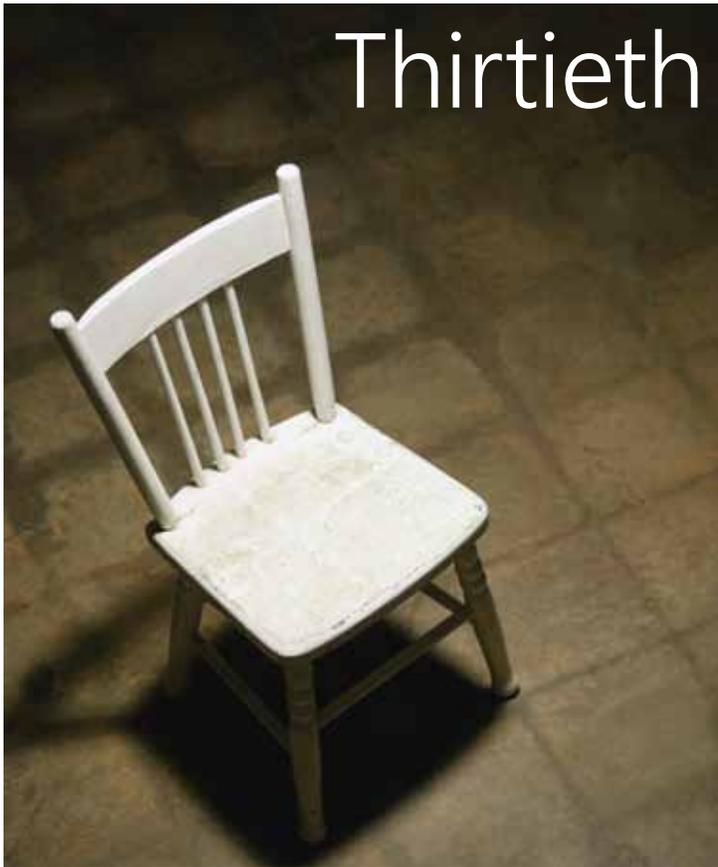
Sneaking or hiding substances or being secretive about activities can also be present. You may see a lot of excuses as well. Something like, “Hey, I have all these tests to study for, and I just need to chill!” or “If you lived my life, you would want to relax, too.” Arguments about drinking or using may be occurring. Unfortunately, dishonesty is prevalent, which violates trust and causes unpleasant and desperate feelings to emerge.



### **How do you know if substance abuse is present?**

My own personal approach to gauging substance abuse is this: If a person’s life is being affected by things like legal issues, family problems, performance issues in school or work, and physical problems, there may be a substance abuse problem. There is treatment and care available. WLCFS-Christian Family Solutions can assist in answering questions, providing a means to assess if there is a problem, and providing care or treatment recommendations. **Please call 800.282.0561 or e-mail [jrichardson@wlcfs.org](mailto:jrichardson@wlcfs.org) for more information and support.**

# Thirtieth Retreat in 2014



Yes, we are still looking into the plans for the 30th A&DA Retreat. The theme remains the same, "The Empty Chair." We would address how our Lord helps us through the challenges of our recovery and provides strength to deal with them. Feelings of emptiness and loss are replaced with a new and better lifestyle and improved relationships.

**Please note** that the time of year may need to be delayed due to finding an open location for the retreat. Continue to watch for more information in the Spring newsletter as to the WHERE and WHEN of our Anniversary Retreat!

## 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) 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	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 Six: "Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character."

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