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The Serenity Times

The monthly newsletter of the Darwin District



God conscious

Our more religious members call it "God-consciousness" - Appendix II, Spiritual Experience, p 568

I worked a 12-Step program with an AA sponsor for years but I didn't have a spiritual awakening. I asked my sponsor about it and she suggested more 12th Step work and AA service. I became run off my feet with AA commitments, but no spiritual awakening came.

Eventually I found someone in AA who had had a spiritual awakening through the Big Book and I asked her to show me how to have one. She showed me a way of working Steps 1 to 9 that was more thorough than I was used to and finally I experienced the level of humility needed to bring about a spiritual awakening. My spiritual awakening was the breathtaking realisation that God is all there is, that there is only God.

At Step Five, I felt God's presence for the first time and by the time I was halfway through Step Nine, I had a near constant consciousness of the presence of God.

If you have completed Step Five and you are yet to feel God's presence, find someone in AA who does and ask to be shown how to have a spiritual awakening. Then go back to Step One because you have missed something.



Willingness

There is only one key, and it is called willingness - Step Three, Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, p 34.

Willingness is the key to our recovery from alcoholism. Willingness to do what? Willingness to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God.

At Step Three, we made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, but Step Three is only a decision. The actual turning of our will and lives over to the care of God occurs when we make a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves (Step Four), share it with God and another human being (Step Five), become entirely ready to have God remove our defects of character (Step Six), humbly ask God to remove our shortcomings (Step Seven), make a list of all of the people we have harmed and become willing to make amends to them all (Step Eight), make direct amends (Step Nine), continue to make inventory and amends (Step Ten), connect to God through prayer and meditation (Step Eleven) and carry AA's message to alcoholics (Step Twelve).

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Amends stories

Simply we tell him that we will never get over drinking until we have done our utmost to straighten out the past - Into Action, p 77

Made direct amends to such people wherever possible... - Step Nine

A remorseful mumbling that we are sorry won't fill the bill at all - Into Action, p 83

But as he calmed down, he began to listen while I tried to show him that humility was the main key to sobriety - Tradition Five, Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, p 153

I always thought that I would experience freedom when I received amends for the wrongs done to me. I have found instead that freedom has come from making humble amends for my own wrongs. Each of my experiences in Step Nine has been a spiritual experience and in each case, God has granted me exactly what I needed.

In making humble amends to a former colleague and seeing in her eyes how much my cutting and judgmental remarks had hurt her, I received a clear understanding of my powerlessness, without God's help, to stop hurting other human beings.

In making humble amends to a former boss who had not treated me well, I was granted clarity about what had been a confusing and distressing series of events at my former workplace. After I humbly admitted my wrongs and asked if there was any other wrong I had done her and anything that I could do to make things right, my former boss rambled, trembled and was in turns angry and apologetic. As I sat listening in respectful and attentive silence, I was suddenly granted absolute clarity about my experiences with her, like a download directly into my brain, an experience that likely would not have happened had I not made direct (in person) amends to her. I told her how

much I appreciated her taking the time out of her busy day to meet with me and I meant it. As I walked away, I knew that I was finally free of that painful episode of my life.

I have heard AA members say that you can't make amends to the dead, but that's not my experience. I made amends to a number of people and three animals who had died and I got free. My amends to the deceased were perhaps the strangest of my amends experiences. In each case, I humbly admitted my wrongs, I said that I was wrong to have done what I did, that they didn't deserve to be treated that way and that I was truly sorry. I asked if there was any other wrong I had done them and anything that I could do to make things right, then I sat quietly and waited for a response. In each case, a response came; I then agreed to make amends in the manner suggested. When I was done, I felt an overwhelming sense of having been forgiven that ran over me and through me, and of unfinished business now finished.

My experiences of making humble amends to three people I had once detested were especially memorable. My sister-in-law and a former boyfriend responded generously and with their own apologies and we chatted warmly for a long time, parting ways with a heartfelt promise to catch up again soon. Another former boyfriend, who had broken up with me years earlier, revealed himself during the amends to be the compulsive liar and practitioner of the non sequitur that I had remembered him to be. When the amends was finished, I thanked God from the bottom of my heart for revealing him to me once more and for removing him from my life all those years ago.

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Send us an account of some of your more memorable experiences of making amends and we will publish it in The Serenity Times