



May 2020

The Serenity Times

The monthly newsletter of the Darwin District



Finding God

When I was three years old, in a family of atheists I developed a fascination with God. I had the notion that God lived in the clouds and I would spend hours searching the sky in the hope of seeing him. At the age of 9, I abandoned God as a childish fiction, like Santa and the Easter Bunny. I remember the darkness that descended on my life after that.

At the age of 33, I attended my first AA meeting. An atheist, my heart sank when I saw the word "God" on the banners, but desperation planted me in my seat. At one AA Group, members suggested that I find myself an AA sponsor and start work on AA's 12-Step program of recovery. So I found a sponsor and I worked a 12-Step program with her, but no faith in or connection to God came.

I found someone who had had a spiritual awakening through the Big Book. She showed me a way of doing Step Four that was more thorough than I was used to and which produced in me the level of humility needed to bring about a spiritual awakening. Toward the end of my Fifth Step, I was home alone sitting at my dining table when suddenly I felt God in the room. I realised that God had been with me all of my life, but that sensing his presence would require me to live my life in a state of great humility.



Faith & trust

We trust infinite God rather than our finite selves - How It Works, p 68

In 1860, the French tightrope walker and acrobat Charles Blondin announced that he would walk across Niagara Falls on a tightrope and on the appointed day, a large crowd gathered on both sides of the river. Blondin crossed not once but several times: once in a sack, once blindfolded, once on a bicycle, once pushing a wheelbarrow. A great showman, Blondin asked the crowd if they believed that he could carry a person across in his wheelbarrow. The crowd yelled, "We believe!" Blondin responded, "Okay, who wants to get in the wheelbarrow?" The crowd fell silent.

Faith is believing that a tightrope walker can push a wheelbarrow over a ravine. Trust is getting in the wheelbarrow.

So too is trust in God an all-in exercise: either we trust God with our lives or we don't. I have found that when I have placed my life in God's hands, truly remarkable things have followed.

And if God should call me home soon, then I will be glad that I will soon be reunited with the God who made me.

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Usefully whole

The authors of the Big Book say that alcoholism is a fatal spiritual malady, only one symptom of which is the uncontrollable consumption of alcohol, and that our real purpose in recovering from alcoholism is to render ourselves useful to God and to others. Standing in the way of our usefulness are our defects of character (Into Action, p 76).

Looking back on my life in Step Four, I saw that my fears were the root cause of all of my defects and harms to others and that they had been there from my earliest recollection. On arrival at my first day of kindergarten, I looked around at my new classmates and I thought, "I just don't think I'm going to fit in here." I was four years old. I was relieved when I later found alcohol because when I was drunk, I felt free of fear and I felt whole. But drinking quickly took over my life and I became useless to others, which was crushing.

AA's message is so much more than "don't drink and go to AA meetings" and AA offers so much more than just sobriety. The authors of the Big Book promise that if our work on AA's 12-Step program of recovery is thorough, we will undergo a personality change of a magnitude sufficient to bring about a spiritual awakening and recovery from alcoholism and we will become happily and usefully whole.



Tradition 3

Our membership ought to include all who suffer from alcoholism. Hence we may refuse none who wish to recover. Nor ought AA membership depend upon money or conformity...- Tradition Three (long form)

I have heard and seen my share of eccentric and peculiar behaviour in my 20 plus years in AA. Luckily for alcoholics, conformity is not a prerequisite for AA membership.

Some years back, an AA Group whose meetings I sometimes attended held a Group Conscience meeting and decided that one of its members was not an alcoholic. The Group then told the AA member to leave the Group and never come back.

AA leaves it to individuals to decide for themselves whether or not they are alcoholic. The excluded AA member was admittedly as crazy as a clown car in a nut factory, but he had expressed a desire to stop drinking, he was not violent and he had made no threats of violence. News of the Group's actions swept through AA and consequences came swiftly: AA members stayed away from the Group's meetings in droves. The Group got the message and learned a valuable lesson about Tradition Three.

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