



Pipeline



A Publication of NH Area 43 Assembly

January 2004

Promises, Promises

reprinted from the May 1981 Grapevine

I love the so-called promises in the paragraph that begins at the bottom of page 83 and continues at the top of page 84 of the Big Book. I frequently quote one or another of them. I often mention them in an AA qualification.

That's why I was pleased recently to receive a scroll containing 'The Promises,' inscribed in beautiful calligraphy, as a souvenir of an AA dinner I attended. And then, as I admired the scroll, it set me to thinking. We are certainly hearing more about "The Promises" these days. I've seen them printed in AA newsletters and bulletins and AA convention programs. I've heard members ask, "Why doesn't AA offer 'The Promises' as a wall plaque like the Steps and the Traditions? And maybe on a wallet card?"

Is this a trend in our Fellowship this lifting the promises out of context and inscribing them in bronze? Are we sanctifying the promises?

If so, it troubles me. I view such a trend with alarm. Why?

Because, first of all, if we go back to the source and read the paragraph of the Big Book containing the promises, it is immediately clear that they were not intended to be set apart. They are not written as a separate element as are the Steps (page 59) or the Traditions (beginning page 564).

They are buried in the text (and within the context), and for a reason:

They are part of a discussion of how to work the Steps. Not even all the Steps, really, but specifically the first nine. The paragraph in question follows a long description of the mess our alcoholic lives are in and advice on how to work our way out.

Second, these are not *unconditional* promises as they seem to be when set apart. Quite the contrary. They are a spontaneous, almost euphoric expression of the experiences of the authors with the rewards that can be expected "if we are painstaking about this phase of our development." What phase? The working of the first nine Steps as described in the preceding twenty-four pages!

And how many of us have actually worked the Steps that way? How many of us, for example, in doing our Fourth Step inventory, have followed the example in the Big Book? - a written "grudge list" in three separate columns, analyzing the causes of each resentment and how it affects us. Not I. How many of us took Steps Eight and Nine with the diligence and thoroughness recommended in detail from page 76 to page 83 in the Big Book? Not I. Yet we must recognize that that is what is meant by being "painstaking."

What the Big Book is saying on page 83 is that *if we have bared our souls, if we have completely reconstructed our shattered relationships with others, then we "are going to know a new freedom. . ."* then "we will not regret the past," and so on, through the rest of the promises. In fact, it says 'they will always materialize *if we work for them*' (the italics are mine). And the rest

of that chapter is devoted to telling us how to continue to *work for them* by practicing Steps Ten and Eleven.

Finally, it seems to me that when I quote the promises so glibly and smugly (as I am inclined to do), I may actually be playing down the Steps. Am I glorifying end results while ignoring the footwork necessary to get there? Is it easier and more comforting to take refuge in the promises (lifting them out of context, of course) than to go through the

purging and the pain of taking the first nine Steps - which are clearly the prerequisites of the promises? The alcoholic seizes upon the promises, consciously or unconsciously, as "an easier, softer way."

So let's read and reread Chapters Five and Six (along with the rest of the Big Book, naturally!). And when we get to the beautiful section on pages 83 and 84, let's cherish the promised rewards set forth there. Let's carry them in our minds and hearts as a joyous and inspiring part of our program of recovery.

But let's not sanctify the promises.

B. P., Riverside, Conn.

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If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are halfway through.

Throughout 2004, we will be featuring articles about the **Twelve Promises** of Alcoholics Anonymous. How have the promises come true in your life? Tell us about it!

Submit your articles to:
attn: Pipeline
NH Area Service Office
1330 Hooksett Rd.,
Hooksett NH 03106
or
e-mail to: office@nhaa.mv.com
(please put "for Pipeline"
in the subject line)

FEBRUARY
"We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness"
MARCH
"We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it."

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A Publication of the
NH Area 43 Assembly of
Alcoholics Anonymous

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Please put "For Pipeline"
in subject line.

Pipeline Statement of Purpose

The New Hampshire Area Pipeline will be the voice of Alcoholics Anonymous within Area 43. Its editors and staff will be primarily accountable to New Hampshire A. A. Area 43 as a whole. Within the bounds of friendliness and good taste, the Pipeline will enjoy perfect freedom of speech on all matters directly pertaining to Alcoholics Anonymous within Area 43. Like the A.A. movement it mirrors, the primary purpose of the New Hampshire Pipeline will be to try to carry the A.A. message to alcoholics and practice the A.A. principles in all its affairs.

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Group Information

New Groups

District 8

Concord Thursday 8 - 9:15PM SD
Crazy in AA Young Peoples Meeting
Chem Free Cafe (behind Dunkin Donuts)
4 Garvins Falls Road

District 17

Colebrook Wednesday 6:30 - 7:30PM X
Step Sisters
St. Stevens Episcopal Church,
Parsons St. Route 26

Meeting Changes

District 7

Rindge Tuesday 7 - 8:30PM CX
Rindge Original Step Meeting
Franklin Pierce College, Mt. View Community Ctr.
Mountain & College Road
Used to meet 7:30 - 9

District 9

Derry Friday 7 - 8:30 PM HSD
Men's Beginner's Group
Friendship Center, 45 E. Broadway
used to meet at West Side Center

District 12

Manch. Wednesday 7:15 - 8:30PM CS
Grateful Acceptance 12 Step Group
New Horizons Shelter, 199 Manchester St.
Group restarted, used to be at St. Andrews

More Meeting Changes

District 16

Alton Thursday 8 - 9 PM HSD
Gateway to Sobriety
Community Church of Alton, Church Street
used to meet at Baptist Meeting House

District 19

Keene Friday 9 - 10PM D
Candlelight Meeting
64 Beaver St., rear building, 2nd floor
Used to meet at Keene Senior Center

Keene Sunday 10 - 11AM CDH
Serenity Group
64 Beaver St., rear building, 2nd floor
Used to meet at Senior Ctr 10:30 - Noon

Keene Sunday 6:30 - 8PM BXD
Big Book Step Study
Keene Copy Building, 415 Marlboro Street
Used to meet at Senior Center, 7 - 8:30

Disbanded Meetings

Distict 14

Hampton Saturday/Sunday 8:00 - 8:45 AM CD
Morning Meditation
Heritage Room, United Methodist Church
525 Lafayette Road
Still meets Monday - Friday!

Happy New Year From Your Service Office

Tradition Three states that the only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking, yet how do we explain "specialty groups"? You know the kind - women's meetings, men's meetings, gay/lesbian meetings, airline employee meetings - any kind of AA meeting that implies a secondary qualification.

Well, as groups, these specialty meetings most often will welcome any alcoholic in need, regardless of their gender, orientation or employment. (A recent iSay entry at the Grapevine web page was written by a young professional model who was being sexually harassed at regular AA meetings, so she began attending a gay men's meeting, ensuring her safety.) Those who attend specialty meetings most often attend "regular" meetings as well. Specialty meetings serve two purposes - they often introduce the newcomer to AA in a very safe way, and they can help the alcoholic who feels "different" to see that he/she does have peers in the fellowship.

One type of specialty meeting that is becoming more popular in Area 43 is the young people's meeting. The first young people's meetings were held in the early 1940's (making this one of the oldest specialty types in AA history), and were geared toward alcoholics in their 30's. Today, of course, we have children in AA, sometimes even before they reach their teens, who have proved themselves alcoholic at a very young age.

Today's young people's meetings include many of our youngest members (as well as many older, young-at-heart alcoholics), and give them a place to talk about recovery in their contemporary lingo. Young people's meetings are open to all, regardless of age. As the saying goes in AA, young means "still room to grow!"

We currently are aware of ten young people's AA meetings in New Hampshire: 2:30 pm (Noon in the summertime) Tuesdays at Timberlane High School in Plaistow; 7 pm Tuesdays at St. John's Church in Portsmouth; 6 pm Tuesdays at Merrimack County Offices in Concord; 3 pm Wednesdays at the Triangle Club in Dover; 7 pm Wednesdays at 99 Hanover Street in Manchester; 7pm Wednesdays at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Keene; 7:30 pm Wednesdays at the Dover Youth Center in Dover; 8 pm Thursdays at the Chem Free Cafe in Concord; 7 pm Fridays at the First Congregational Church in Ossipee; and 7:30 pm Saturdays at the United Methodist Church in Salem.

In office news, we do have a new Grapevine book, *Spiritual Awakenings: Journeys of the Spirt*, available for just \$7.95.

We also have started collecting meeting information for the next new statewide meeting list. If you know of any corrections that should be made to the current green book, please let us know!

We want to thank Doris C. of Manchester, volunteer extraordinaire, for her weekly visit.

In grateful service, Karen, Mary Anne and Ingrid

Donations THANK YOU!

Living Sober	Andover
Basic 12 Step	Bedford
Pass It On	Bedford
Guardian Angel Big Book	Berlin
Newfound Lake Group	Bristol
Daily Reflections	Concord
Friday Night Potpourri	Ctr Harbor
Men's Beginners Group	Derry
Derry Original	Derry
Unity Group	Derry
Happy Hour Group	Derry
Morning Reflections	Dover
Durham Original	Durham
Exeter Big Book	Exeter
Exeter AA	Exeter
Exeter Serenity	Exeter
Women's Joy Of Living	Hampstead
Sat Nite Original	Hampstead
Stepping Stones	Hampton
Way Out Group	Hampton
Keep Coming Back	Henniker
One Day At A Time	Hopkinton
Big Book Step Study	Keene
Kingston 12&12	Kingston
What's Good About Today	Kittery
Lee Discussion Group	Lee
Primary Purpose	Lincoln
Out To Lunch Bunch	Littleton
Live And Let Live	Londonderry
Free At Last	Manchester
Original Happy Hour West	Manchester
Happy Hour East	Manchester
New Life Group	Manchester
Women's Daytime	Manchester
Queen City Group	Manchester
First Light Of Day	Manchester
How To 12&12	Manchester
Milford No-Name	Milford
Souhegan Sun	Milford
Milton AA Group	Milton
Peculiar Mental Twists	Nashua
Sunday Recovery.	Nashua
Sat AM Women In Recovery	Nashua
So Nashua Today Group	Nashua
As Bill Sees It	New London
New London Original	New London
New London Group	New London
Gosh Port	Newport
Discussion Meeting	Newport
Monday Night Big Book	North Conway
Living Hope	Northwood
Pelham Big Book	Pelham
Saturday Nite Live	Peterborough
Stepping Stones	Plaistow
Tues Night Young People	Portsmouth
Faith Group	Portsmouth
Early Birds Group	Portsmouth
Reborn Group	Portsmouth
Raymond Recovery	Raymond
Rochester Fri Nite	Rochester
Salem Noontime Group	Salem
Sanbornville Group	Sanbornville
Fri Night Beginners	Somersworth
First Things First	Weare
Whitefield Group	Whitefield
Noontime Group	Wolfboro Falls



FROM OUR MAILBOX

It is the policy of the Pipeline not to print any material defamatory to any particular AA group or member. We did receive an article this month written by a disillusioned long-time member who chose to drink again. The author did make several solid points, so we've chosen to print an edited version with identifying material omitted. We hope that as our readers, you will read this with an open mind and consider your own group's inventory. Are you welcoming to all who come to your meeting? Do you recognize that the still-suffering alcoholic may be sober quite some time and not brand new? There, but for the grace of God, go we. In the words of Bill W., may our critics become our best benefactors. And, to the writer, thank you for your courage. We sincerely hope to welcome you at your next meeting. May we meet on the road of a happier destiny. - The Editors.

To whoever is out there, I want to tell you I am drunk after 19 years. The people I got sober with are gone and the ones that are left are a bunch of liars and fakes. (Someone) has taken control of our home group. Nothing happens unless (they) allow it. (They are) the biggest fake of all.

I chose to drink over physical pain and (health problems), because, of course, it's wrong to take pills. "We are not doctors." I understand there is no tolerance for the single drunk living alone who cannot meet the standards of a healthy alcoholic in A.A. We are no longer asked to speak when we are older in sobriety because the new ones would rather hear war stories than how hard it can be to stay sober. I have had more people put me down since I have been sick, and tell me "we only deal with alcoholism here."

I am angry, sick, and tired of being an active AA member for all these years. I have no one to turn to. NINETEEN YEARS! I do not meet the "criteria" as far as money and status are concerned for the (cliques in my area). I cannot believe I am in this condition, ready to blow my head off, with no one to turn to after all this time. Thanks for listening.

... I hope I have another recovery in me, but sincerely doubt it because no one would welcome me. Thanks AA.

Can You Feel the Heat?



Do you own your own HVAC business?
The Service Office is interested in hiring a member of the fellowship to service and maintain our heating and air conditioning systems. If interested please call the Service Office directly, at 622-6967.

Meeting Space Available!

Peace and Serenity
225 Derry Rd, Rte 102
Hudson
Lisa 598-9642
Yoga Room available
M-F, daytime

More on the Promises...

The Spiritual Side?

For this AA, the whole program is spiritual

Before I came to my first meeting, I had heard of God. He was that thing that some people believed in so they could fool themselves into thinking that their miserable lives were okay. I knew better, of course, and I'd have another drink and feel sorry for those misguided folks.

The one thing I always resented was that they somehow managed to fool themselves into being happy. How I always wanted to feel happy! But I never knew how. It was a cinch that I couldn't get happy by believing in something like a higher power that I knew wasn't real.

I must've been hurting as much as I needed to hurt on the night I went to my first AA meeting. I remember only one thing that was said in the meeting. A woman with some sobriety was chairing the newcomers' table, and the topic was "A Power Greater Than Yourself." Of all the things she said, I remember just this: "Two can do more than one can." When I left that meeting, as I was walking alone to my car, I remember actually saying out loud, "I don't have to drink before I go to bed tonight."

Before that meeting, I'd had no intention whatever of going to a second meeting. But, as foggy and uncoordinated as my thinking was then, I knew I'd seen *something*, and I knew I had to go again the next night to try to find out what that something was.

I know now that I received two gifts that night that I had no way of understanding: For the first time in my life, I accepted the fact that there was a Power greater than myself; and I was given my first realization that such a Power could and would actually help me. That was the "something" I had to "keep coming back" to find out more about.

Some have called this sort of thing "the spiritual side" of the program. To me, the spiritual side of the AA program is the only side there is. There

are several things that are suggested for me to do, all contained in the Twelve Steps. I've seen only one thing that it's suggested I believe that a Power greater than myself could restore me to sanity.

Everything good I've experienced, I believe, has come from a Higher Power. I choose to call that spiritual, and I have seen nothing in AA that wasn't spiritual.

The Big Book says that God is within each one of us. He doesn't talk to me through burning bushes, but I hear Him through everyone who speaks at an AA meeting. And occasionally now, I recognize that some of my thoughts and feelings when I'm alone couldn't have come from me. I call that "conscious contact," and for the past few days it's been very strong.

Right now, I'm at the start of a three-month stay in a city away from where I started in AA, and I've been feeling a bit lonely. I used to feel lonely all the time, but nowadays it's a rare emotion. I go to lots of meetings, and I have lots of new friends, and I don't feel alone - but it does feel lonely to be away from folks I've shared so much with.

However, I saw just a few days ago that God is filling that void. I'm having much more conscious contact with God now, when there's no one around, than I ever did before - and I'm sure that it's being given to me at this time because this is when I need it. I am still amazed every time this program works! And I hope I always feel amazed every time, so that AA will always feel fresh and new to me.

Thank you for sharing the God that's in all of you and so allowing me to live - because for the first time in my life, life is great!

R. P., Bellevue, Nebr.

*from the April 1983 Grapevine
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NERAASA 2004

*(North East Regional
Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly)*

Coming to the Sheraton Nashua

February 27, 28 & 29, 2004

Registration forms available
at the Service Office!

**Save the
Dates!**

2004 Area 43 Convention

April 2, 3, & 4

Sheraton Wayfarer, Bedford NH

Raffle winner to be pulled on
January 27th!