

Just for Today On the Bay

The Bay Area newsletter May, June, July 2004

Forgiveness

The way OUT of bonding to your wounds is through forgiveness. Forgiveness is one of the most powerful things that you can do for your physiology and your spirituality, and it remains one of the least attractive things to us, largely because our egos rule us so unequivocally. “W.D.

Forgiveness eluded me for a long time because I believed that people were inherently ‘bad’ and that they weren’t to be trusted; no one had good intentions and they all wanted something from me. It was only when I realized that every encounter was a gift and that my perception always affected the outcome was I then able to comprehend some of the information I was reading. For example, our Basic Text states on page 38, “As we realize our need to be forgiven, we tend to be more forgiving”, “...we have become ready to understand rather than to be understood” page 36, and “It will not make us better people to judge the faults of another.

It will make us feel better to clean up our lives by relieving ourselves of guilt” page 37.

I have read a lot of literature through the years to improve upon myself and to work from the inside out. Through NA, I have come to realize that the ‘inside’ is where I have lived in fear all my life, and that I was only hiding behind the exterior (the image, the car, the clothes, the house, the job, etc.). However, none of these ‘things’ ever made me happy; temporarily yes- long term never. Yet, somehow once I got clean I started seeking these ‘things’ all over again., until I realized that the problems I had: relationships, anger, self worth, self image, etc. did not come from OUTWARD ‘THINGS’, and that they were only able to be healed through an inward journey that I pray I will stay on for the rest of my life. The amazing thing is that the God of my understanding brought me to a place (NA) where there is a simple course outlined to a tee for me to follow.

Anniversaries

The steps, when worked IN ORDER, teach me how to forgive and how to accept being forgiven, how to identify what my part in things actually are, what qualities I possess, and which ones need to be worked on for the betterment of myself (assets and defects etc...). However, I can't start at step four or even two, I have to start at step one, and then work them in order through to step twelve. And, the amazing gift is that I don't graduate when I finish all twelve-I start all over again. For me, I believe that forgiveness says that I refuse to be calloused by those that have calloused me and that I allow myself to be open to receiving love; especially from myself. I used to think that forgiveness was somehow associated with saying that it was okay and that I accepted the wrong doing of another person, but that is not forgiveness to me. Today it means that I can privately forgive someone and not ask, nor expect anyone else to understand. It means that I can radiate love outwardly to everyone without expectation, or reward. Forgiveness heals me, and allows the other person to just be human. In the It Works How and Why, on page 78 it states that "our ability to forgive comes from our ability to accept and be compassionate with OURSELVES", and that "we've begun to accept ourselves as we are and now we begin to accept others as they are." A crucial point is made on page 85 in the It Works How and Why that clears up any fear I may have of extending these behaviors out into the world outside of NA which states that "recovering addicts don't hold a monopoly on kindness or forgiveness". Just for today: I will treat others with the tolerance and forgiveness that I seek for myself.

Jennifer S.

Eric A.	06/02/01	3 Yrs
Karl P.	06/26/94	10 Yrs
Rene R.	07/03/94	10 Yrs
Lisa R.	05/07/01	3 Yrs
Tim P.	06/15/01	3 Yrs
Kim F.	06/20/02	1 Yr
Mike F.	06/26/98	6 Yrs
Big John	05/01/02	2 Yrs
Angelica D.	05/22/03	1 Yr
Craig S	05/01/92	12 Yrs
Robert C	05/04/88	16 Yrs
Wendi S.	05/15/83	21 Yrs
Gabbie B.	06/30/03	1 Yr
Johnny B.	06/10/95	9 Yrs
Sloan B.	06/12/03	1 Yr
Beth W.	07/13/84	10 Yrs
Michael F.	07/21/02	2 Yrs
Patrick	07/12/03	1 Yr
Tom Q.	07/18/03	1 Yr
Tracie M.	07/22/91	13 Yrs
Paul W.	05/06/02	2 Yrs
Natalie	05/10/02	2 Yrs
Johnny D	06/04/00	4 Yrs
Henry H.	07/89	15 Yrs
Ricki L.	05/01/02	2 Yrs
Lisa E.	05/01/02	2 Yrs
David B.	05/13/01	3 Yrs
Steve D.	05/12/81	23 Yrs
Eric G.	05/20/99	5 Yrs

That's 184 Years of Recovery!

Changing Sponsors

I have had the opportunity throughout my recovery to have, be and use a sponsor. The relationships I have had with the 3 sponsors in my life have been 3 of the most amazing gifts of my recovery. Obviously having had 3 sponsors it has required at least two decisions to change. Coming to the decision to change sponsors has been at times a very painful, process requiring honesty, courage, prayer etc. Each time I went to my sponsor and had enough respect for them and myself to talk to them about my concerns, issues, feelings, thoughts etc. concerning our relationship. It has not always been easy because I want everyone to like me. That is like trying to control the uncontrollable. I have maintained relationships with my past two sponsors because they felt respected and were able to deal with the way our relationship changed. I am grateful to those women because they taught me how to do those things that may be a little uncomfortable or downright painful. I can't be expected to know how to do something if I've never been taught how to do it. Over the years that I have been clean I have had the privilege of sponsoring many women, some for a few months and some for several years. The last two women I sponsored for any length of time who decided to get new sponsors basically blindsided me with their decisions. It would have been, in my opinion, more appropriate and respectful for them to come to me and discuss the situation with me **PRIOR** to making a change. I don't believe that a sponsee's decision to change sponsors should ever come as a surprise to their spon-

sor. I have been approached by women who have discussed with me about the possibility of me sponsoring them. Something I have learned from my wonderful sponsor is to ask them why they want to make a change and if they have talked with their current sponsor about their concerns first. Often times I will delay informing them of my decision until they have taken the opportunity to talk to their sponsor. If they do not respect their sponsor enough to discuss this very important situation with them then how can I expect to be treated any better if I choose to sponsor them. I understand that I am powerless in some situations in my life but I can't just complain about it. I need to be a part of the solution. I have a good friend who is a singer/songwriter and he says that songwriters don't go to therapy they write songs to process. I guess this is my way of helping myself process this hurt. I learned along time ago that if I wouldn't have it said or done to me then I don't need to do it or say it to anyone else. Others may disagree with the contents of this article and that is totally okay with me. **Our diversity is our strength.** I don't think anyone would disagree with the fact that our lives could use more respect and love. The fellowship would be a better place if we all spent more time looking for the God in each other rather than the flaws.

Florida Region Help lines

For Hearing Impaired, please call:

Florida Relay Service— 800-955-8770

Bahamas Area: 242/325-6200—The Islands

Bay Area: 727/547-0444—Tarpon Springs, Dunedin, Palm Harbor, Largo, Clearwater, St. Pete, Gulf Beaches, Indian Rocks Beach, Oldsmar

Big Bend Area: 850/599-2876—Tallahassee and Panhandle area

Chain O'Lakes Area: 352/319-5617—Lake County, Eustis, Tavares, Leesburg, Mt. Dora

Daytona Area: 904/831-1660 & 800/477-0731—Daytona Beach, Orange City, Deland, Deltona & New Smyrna Beach

First Coast Area: 904/723-5683 & 800/576-4357—Jacksonville, Fernandina Beach, St. Augustine, Orange Park, Palatka, Green Cove Springs

Forest Area: 352/368-6061—Ocala and surrounding areas

Heartland Area: 863/609-6040 & 888/210-2118—Polk County, Lakeland, Hardee County, Highlands County, Bartow, Haines City

Orlando Area: 407/425-5157—Osceola, Orange, Seminole and parts of Lake County, Kissimmee

Palm Coast Area: 561/848-6262—West Palm Beach, Palm Beach, Lantana, Riviera Beach, Royal Palm

Recovery Coast Area: 727/842-2433 & 800-691-5551—Pasco County, New Port Richey, Hudson, Holiday, Zephyrhills, Dade City

River Coast Area: Citrus County: 352/621-6737,

Hernando County: 352/754-2000—Brooksville, Spring Hill, Homosassa, Floral City

Space Coast Area: 321/631-4357—Titusville, Cocoa Beach, Melbourne, Palm Bay, Merritt Island

Sun Coast Area: 941/957-7910—Bradenton, Sarasota & Manatee Counties

Tampa Funcoast Area: 813/879-4357—Hillsborough County, including Tampa, Oldsmar, Lutz & Brandon

Treasure Coast Area: 561/343-8373—Okeechobee, Port St. Lucie, Stuart, Vero Beach, Ft. Pierce

UnCoast Area: 352/376-8008 Gainesville, Alachua, Lake City, Live Oak, O'Brien & Gilchrist

We would like to thank all of you who contributed to the newsletter. It was by your efforts that this publication was made possible. We look forward to your contributions in upcoming publications, and we accept articles, poetry, jokes and cartoons. We will try our best to let everyone know what the theme will be as soon as possible. There are many ways to submit your writing. Some of them are listed below. You may also give a hardcopy of your work to one of the newsletter subcommittee members.

◆ **E-mail to:** lit@bascna.org,
colforbin30@hotmail.com, rking1@tampabay.rr.com

◆ **Or mail to:** BASCNA

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P.O. Box 703
Largo, FL 34649

ILS, Shawn G.

AREA SERVICE AND SUB-COMMITTEE TIMES

Activities meets every Thursday at 6:30pm at Borders Book Store at Tyrone Mall. Additional Needs meets the Saturday before Sunday ASC at 4:00pm.

Sunday morning before ASC:

Hospitals & Institutions	9:00 AM
Public Information	10:30 AM
Helpline	11:00 AM
Literature	11:30 AM
Policy BASCNA	12:00 PM
Administrative	12:45 PM

Area Service Committee (ASC), meets the second Sunday of every month at 1:30 PM in rooms 10 & 20. All meetings are held at Terra Nova* 5501 28th St. N. St Petersburg FL

***NA is not affiliated with any of the facilities listed here.**