Daily Readings and Inspirations January 25


January 25

Daily Reflections

WHAT WE NEED - EACH OTHER

. . . . A.A. is really saying to every serious drinker,
"You are an A.A. member if you say so . . . nobody can keep you out."

TWELVE STEPS AND TWELVE TRADITIONS, p. 139

For years, whenever I reflected on Tradition Three
("The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking"). I thought it valuable only to newcomers. It was their guarantee that no one could bar them from A.A. Today I feel enduring gratitude for the spiritual development the Tradition has brought me. I don't seek out people obviously different from myself.

Tradition Three, concentrating on the one way I am similar to others, brought me to know and help every kind of alcoholic, just as they have helped me.

Charlotte, the atheist, showed me higher standards of ethics and honor; Clay, of another race, taught me patience; Winslow, who is gay, led me by example into true compassion; Young Megan says that seeing me at meetings, sober thirty years, keeps her coming back.

Tradition Three insured that we would get what we need
- each other.

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Twenty-Four Hours A Day
A.A. Thought For The Day

We used to depend on drinking for a lot of things. We depended on drinking to help us enjoy things. It gave us a "kick." It broke down our shyness and helped us to have a "good time." We depended on drinking to help us when we felt low physically. If we had a toothache or just a hangover, we felt better after a few drinks. We depended on drinking to help us when we felt low mentally. If we had a tough day at the office or if we'd had a fight with our wives, or if things just seemed against us, we felt better under the influence of alcohol. For us alcoholics, it got so that we depended on drinking for almost everything. Have I gotten over that dependence on drinking?

Meditation For The Day

I believe that complete surrender of my life to God is the foundation of serenity. God has prepared for us many mansions. I do not look upon that promise as referring only to the after-life. I do not look upon this life as something to be struggled through, in order to get the rewards of the next life. I believe that the Kingdom of God is within us and we can enjoy "eternal life" here and now.

Prayer For The Day

I pray that I may try to do God's will. I pray that such understanding, insight and vision shall be mine, and shall make my life eternal, here and now.

As Bill Sees It

We Cannot Stand Still, p. 25

In the first days of A.A., I wasn't much bothered about the areas of life in which I was standing still. There was always the alibi: "After all," I said to myself, "I'm far too busy with much more important matters." That was my near perfect prescription for comfort and complacency.

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How many of us would presume to declare, "Well, I'm sober and I'm happy. What more can I want, or do? I'm fine the way I am." We know that the price of such self-satisfaction is an inevitable backslide, punctuated at some point by a very rude awakening. We have to grow or else deteriorate. For us, the status quo can only be today, never for tomorrow. Change we must; we cannot stand still.

1. Grapevine, June 1961
2. Grapevine, February 1961

Walk In Dry Places

Finding a Higher Good—Handling Trouble.

There are times when things just don't work out, despite our best efforts. Even in sobriety, we can have business or marriage failures, accidents, sicknesses, or trouble in holding a job. Sobriety is no guarantee that things will always work out according to our expectancies.

But no disappointment or failure has to throw us or cause permanent distress. It is some comfort to remember that the meeting of the first two AA members came out of a business failure, not a success. On many occasions, a disappointment or a setback can actually give a person the insight and understanding needed for a new, more successful effort.

We do not, of course, want to rationalize failure. We should also accept responsibility when failure has been the result of negligence or wrong action on our part. Nevertheless, as we continue to seek and to follow God's guidance, we will find the course of our lives that fits our needs and capabilities. There is a higher good in everything. Even our drinking was indirectly beneficial in pushing us toward AA and the program's healing principles.

I will not waste time today brooding over mistakes or losses. I'll know that God is in charge of my life and can turn liabilities into assets and defeats into victories.

Keep It Simple

The best way to find a helping hand is at the end of your arm.----Swedish proverb

During our illness, we hurt others. We hurt ourselves. We messed up a lot.
So, a lot of us come to recovery not trusting ourselves very much. The truth is, as addicts, we couldn't be trusted.

But in recovery, we can be trusted again. We can again live and love ourselves. We do this by finding our spiritual center. This is the place inside of us where our Higher Power lives. We turn our will and our lives over to this spiritual center. We do as our spiritual center tells us. And from our spiritual center, we'll find our values. We'll live better lives. We'll come to trust ourselves again.

Prayer for the Day: Higher Power, thank-you for helping me believe in myself again. I'll treat myself with love and kindness. I know You want me to.

Action for the Day: Today, I'll list four ways I couldn't be trusted during my addiction. I'll also list four ways I can now be trusted.

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Each Day a New Beginning

The time of discipline began. Each of us the pupil of whichever one of us could best teach what each of us needed to learn. --Maria Isabel Barreno

"When the pupil is ready, the teacher appears." Life's lessons often come unexpectedly. They come, nevertheless, and they come according to a time frame that is Divine. As we grow emotionally and spiritually, we are readied for further lessons for which teachers will appear. Perhaps the teacher will be a loving relationship, a difficult loss, or a truant child. The time of learning is seldom free from pain and questioning. But from these experiences and what they can teach us, we are ready to learn. As we are ready, they come.

We all enjoy the easy times when the sailing is smooth, when all is well, when we are feeling no pain. And these periods serve a purpose. They shore us up for the lessons which carry us to a stronger recovery, to a stronger sense of ourselves. To understand that all is well, throughout the learning process, is the basic lesson we need to learn. All is well. The teacher is the guide up the next rung of the ladder.

Let me be grateful for my lessons today and know that all is well.

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NA Just For Today

An Added Gift
"We see it happening among us every day. This miraculous turnabout is evidence of a spiritual awakening."

Basic Text p. 49

We watch them walk in to their first meeting defeated, their spirits broken. Their suffering is obvious, and their desire for help even more apparent. They collect a welcome chip and go back to their seats, shaken by the effort.

We see them again, and they seem a little more comfortable. They've found a sponsor and are attending meetings every night. They still won't meet our glance, but they nod their heads in recognition as we share. We notice a spark of hope in their eyes, and they smile uncertainly when we encourage them to keep coming back.

A few months later, they are standing straight. They've learned how to make eye contact. They're working the steps with their sponsor and are healing as a result. We listen to them sharing at meetings. We stack chairs with them afterward.

A few years later, they are speaking at a convention workshop. They've got a wonderful, humorous personality. They smile when they see us, they hug us, and they tell us they could never have done it without us. And they understand when we say, "nor could we, without you."

Just for today: I will find joy in witnessing the recovery of another.

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**Today's Gift**

Muddy water, let stand, becomes clear. --Lao-tzu

A group of friends went swimming one day and one of them lost a ring in the bottom of the lake. Everyone started diving from different directions to find it until there was so much mud and sand stirred up that no one could see anything. Finally, they decided to clear the water. They waited silently on the edge of the shore for the mud from all their activity to settle. When it finally cleared, one person dove in slowly and picked up the ring. When we are confused about something in our lives, we will often hear answers and advice from all directions. Our friends will tell us one thing and our families another, until we feel pretty well mixed up. If we look away from our problem and let patience and time do their work, the mud inside us will settle and clear. Our answer will become visible, like the glimmer of silver in the water.

Am I overlooking the simple solution?
Touchstones

A richer, more fulfilling, and more peaceful masculine spirituality will depend in no small measure upon new ways of learning to be sexual.—James B. Nelson

For most men, sexuality is one of the central issues in recovery. Our addictive and codependent lives have been fed by an overemphasis on genital sexuality, satisfaction, and performance. Sex is so limited by this emphasis that many men have become more unhappy while becoming sexual athletes.

We need to learn how to deepen our sexual experiences. We can allow ourselves the vulnerability of learning from our partners. We need to know how they relate to us, and how we can have both a spiritual and a physical connection. We can allow ourselves to be in loving relationships and enjoy the pleasure of touch. Consummation may not always be in orgasm, but in intimacy.

Today, I may experience my sexuality in many ways. My spiritual growth cannot be separated from how I learn to be sexual.

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Let me be grateful for my lessons today and know that all is well.
The Language Of Letting Go

Step One

We admitted we were powerless over alcohol - that our lives had become unmanageable. --Step One of Al-Alon

There are many different versions of the First Step for recovering codependents. Some of us admit powerlessness over alcohol or another's alcoholism. Some of us admit powerlessness over people; some over the impact of growing up in an alcoholic family.

One of the most significant words in the First Step is the word we. We come together because of a common problem, and, in the coming together, we find a common solution.

Through the fellowship of Twelve Step programs, many of us discover that although we may have felt alone in our pain, others have experienced a similar suffering. And now many are joining hands in a similar recovery.

We. A significant part of recovery. A shared experience. A shared strength, stronger for the sharing. A shared hopes - for better lives and relationships.

Today, I will be grateful for the many people across the world who call themselves "recovering codependents." Help me know that each time one of us takes a step forward, we pull the entire group forward.

As I go about my day I trust all my decisions to my positive inner guide. Nothing from the past will block me or hold me back. Today is mine to use for growth and recovery. I love myself today. --Ruth Fishel

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Journey To The Heart

Cherish Your Favorite Spaces

Our world abounds with quiet, free sources of revitalization.

“I love going into fabric stores,” one woman told me recently. “I love touching, handling, fondling all the colorful bolts of material. It makes me feel good. It makes me feel happy.

“My favorite activity is spending an afternoon at the library,” one man told me. “If I could only do one thing in life, go one place, that’s what I’d choose. I lose myself in the pages of the books. They take me to
faraway places, places I’ve never seen. And when I leave the library, I feel like I’ve been touched and changed.”

What are the places you like to visit in your town or city? Do you enjoy browsing through a bookstore? Is there a favorite shopping center in your neighborhood where the shopkeepers smile a little more and the window displays please your heart? Do you have a favorite restaurant where drinking a cup of tea changes your mood? Cherish old favorite spaces, and open yourself to discovering new places.

Healing doesn’t have to be extravagant, expensive, or traditional. Sometimes it just means going to the places that make us feel good.

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More Language Of Letting Go

What do you want?

Imagine walking up to the counter at the local fast-food restaurant and asking if they had your order ready. “What order?” the counterperson would ask. “Did you phone one in?” “No, but I thought you might have something for me behind the counter anyway.”

It’s absurd, you might say. How could I expect them to have food ready for me when I hadn’t yet placed my order.

Exactly. And how can you expect the magic of the universe to start bringing you the things and experiences that you want for your life if you haven’t named them yet?

Have you placed an order yet? Maybe you thought about it at the beginning of the year, but put it off until you had more time to think about it. And every day you wake up and stand at the counter of life asking, “What do you have for me?”

If you haven’t asked for anything, you may have to settle for whatever life hands your way. Why not take the time to ask? You don’t have to be too specific, just ask for what you want. Want adventure? Put it on the list. Want love? Write it down. There is no guarantee that you’ll get everything you request. Life may have other plans for you. But you’ll never know whether you can get what you want unless you know what that is, and ask for it first.
God, help me have the courage to bring the desires of my heart to my conscious mind, and to you.

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A Day at a Time

Reflection For The Day

Even with a growing understanding of The Program and its Twelve Steps, we sometimes might find it difficult to believe that our new way of life leads to personal freedom. Suppose, for example, I feel imprisoned in an uncomfortable job or troublesome personal relationship. What am I doing about it? In the past, my reflex reaction was to try to manipulate the things and people around me into being more acceptable to me. Today, I realize that happiness can’t be won that way. Am I learning that freedom from despair and frustration can come only from changing, in myself, the attitudes that are perpetuating the conditions that cause me grief?

Today I Pray

May I be given clear eyes to see - and then to stop myself - when I am manipulating the lives of those around me, my daily associates, friends, family. May I always be aware that change must begin within myself.

Today I Will Remember

Change from the inside out.

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One More Day

Self-Understanding rather than Self-Condemnation is the way to inner peace and mature conscience.
- Joshua Loth Liebman
We can be committees of one, single-handedly striving to show others, by example, that having a chronic medical problem need not keep us out of the mainstream of life. Our health difficulties may heighten our awareness of the value of life, of other people, and of ourselves.

We can hold our heads up high and go out in public. In this way, we refuse to let our diminished health subdue us. By being comfortable with ourselves, smiling at passers-by, and not complaining, we can create an aura of strength and self-assurance. Doing this can challenge and inspire others, and - more importantly - it can do the same for us.

It’s difficult sometimes to leave the security of my home. The more I understand my fears, the easier it is to go out among other people.

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Food For Thought

Sharpening Our Tools

What we do each day is not as important as how we do it. If we are abstaining, working the program, and staying in touch with the Higher Power, then whatever we do during the day will go as it should.

When we get careless and sloppy with abstinence, neglect to use the tools of OA recovery, forget the Twelve Steps, then we may expect trouble. When we are out of touch with our Higher Power and our OA friends, then nothing seems to go as it should.

If you feel yourself becoming careless, then make that neglected phone call, read and re-read the literature, go to a meeting today. Listen within yourself for the quiet voice God uses to give you enthusiasm and direction.

We may each become God's tool if we keep ourselves in good working order through this program.

Make me an effective tool to do Your will.

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One Day At A Time

~ MOVING ON ~

Dwell not on the past. Use it to illustrate a point, then leave it behind.
Nothing really matters except what you do now in this instant of time.
Eileen Caddy

As a child, teen, and young adult, I was sexually, emotionally, mentally and physically abused. I was neglected as well. By the time I was a young woman, the "abuse" was history, and I was left dealing with a very sick family. But I could not let go of my abused past!

The abuse became the topic of every conversation I had. Anything I saw on TV or read in a book or newspaper brought to mind the past. I awoke in the middle of the night to relive my childhood nightmares for a few hours before crying myself back to sleep. I spent entire days staring at the television, eating to numb myself from my pain and anger.

Eventually, I wanted more from my life. I became disgusted with myself and what my life had become. I was led to a Twelve Step group. There I learned how to let go of the past, to work through it, to make amends for my part in things, and to forgive those who abused me.

Today, when I discuss the abuse I suffered, which is seldom, I can do so without the anger and pain bubbling up. I can help others with my story, and then I can let it go. It is my history, but it's no longer ruling my present.

Like Thomas Raddall said, "Don't brood on what's past, but never forget it either."

One Day at a Time . . .

I will make amends and forgive others, not for them, but for me. I pray to live in today, to make it the best day I can.
~ Rhonda ~

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Hour To Hour - Book - Quote
'Live and Let Live' sounds like a simple phrase, but in fact it is imperative for us to practice. When we try to control the actions of others, it only leads to anger, resentment, fury, and finally to a slip.

Higher Power, increase my tolerance so I can 'Live and Let Live' so that I 'Don't Let Live and Die!

Inner Peace

There is peace within me that I can draw on each and every day. I will remind myself to take a few moments today, to center myself. I will breathe. I will sit. And when I go about my day I will carry that lovely feeling of inner peace around with me. There is nothing in my day that is more important than my serenity. Today, I will pay attention to the myriad of ways in which I am thrown off balance. When I feel myself losing my serenity, I'll take a moment to center myself, to breathe, to connect with that part of me that is eternal and unchanging. I'll remind myself that when I can calm my body, mind and spirit, I interact differently with the people, places and things of my day. I am here. My spirit is here. My serenity is at my fingertips. I am in charge of my deeper experience of living. I connect with my divine self and the diving energy that is ever present.

I give myself the gift of inner peace.

- Tian Dayton PhD

Pocket Sponsor - Book - Quote

Let go or be dragged.

I pray for the willingness to be willing to be willing to let go absolutely. (P 97, Meeting Wisdom)

"Walk Softly and Carry a Big Book" - Book

Acceptance is the answer to all my problems today. Page 449. (From the Big Book, 4th edition-now Page 417 from the 5th edition)
Time for Joy - Book - Quote

As I go about my day I trust all my decisions to my positive inner guide. Nothing from the past will block me or hold me back. Today is mine to use for growth and recovery. I love myself today.

Alkiespeak - Book - Quote

I can’t get too cocky around AA. I can be a peacock one day and a feather duster the next. - Unknown origin.

AA Thought for the Day

Bankruptcy
Every natural instinct cries out against the idea of personal powerlessness.
It is truly awful to admit that, glass in hand, we have warped our minds into such an obsession for destructive drinking that only an act of Providence can remove it from us.
No other kind of bankruptcy is like this one.
- Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, p. 21

Thought to Ponder . . .
Avoidance is not the key; surrender opens the door.

AA-related 'Alconym' . . .
K I S S = Keep It Simple; Surrender.
Father Leo's Daily Meditation

HONESTY

"Honesty is the first chapter of the book of wisdom."
-- Thomas Jefferson

It is impossible to have a spiritual program without being honest. It is impossible to be recovering from addiction without being honest. An aspect of sobriety is honesty.

Today I can see that I was never really known when I was "using" because I was so dishonest. I stopped other people from getting to know me. I stopped me from getting to know me. Part of my pain involved my dishonesty; part of my loneliness and feelings of isolation was caused by my dishonesty; the unmanageability that nearly destroyed my life grew in my dishonesty.

Today I need to be honest, rigorously honest --- even in the small things. I can no longer exist to please others --- I need to please myself.

I need to love myself by being honest.

O God of wisdom, let me find truth in the honesty of my own life.

"Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart." Psalm 37:4

"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that in due time He may exalt you. Cast all your anxieties on Him, for He cares about you." 1 Peter 5:6-7

"Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice." Psalm 105:3

But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. "Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you." Luke 6:35-38
Daily Inspiration

Avoid saying "No one knows." because God knows and understands more perfectly than we ourselves do. Calm my fears, Lord, and lift the burdens that I cannot carry alone.

To have a great day isn't always doing what you like, but trying to like what you must do. Lord, today I will spruce up my attitude and have a great day no matter what my circumstances.

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