Daily Readings and Inspirations April 11


April 11

Daily Reflections

A WORD TO DROP: "BLAME"

To see how erratic emotions victimized us often took a long time. We could perceive them quickly in others, but only slowly in ourselves. First of all, we had to admit that we had many of these defects, even though such disclosures were painful and humiliating. Where other people were concerned, we had to drop the word "blame" from our speech and thought.

TWELVE STEPS AND TWELVE TRADITIONS, p. 47

When I did my Fourth Step, following the Big Book guidelines, I noticed that my grudge list was filled with my prejudices and my blaming others for my not being able to succeed and to live up to my potential. I also discovered I felt different because I was black. As I continued to work on the Step, I learned that I always had drunk to rid myself of those feelings. It was only when I sobered up and worked on my inventory, that I could no longer blame anyone.

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Twenty-Four Hours A Day

A.A. Thought For The Day

In that alcoholic world, one drink always leads to another and you can't stop till you're paralyzed. And the next morning it begins all over again. You eventually land in a hospital or jail. You lose your job. Your
home is broken up. You're always in a mess. You're on the merry-go-round and you can't get off. You're in a squirrel cage and you can't get out. Am I convinced that the alcoholic world is not a pleasant place for me to live in?

Meditation For The Day

I must learn to accept self-discipline. I must try never to yield one point that I have already won. I must not let myself go in resentments, hates, fears, pride, lust, or gossip. Even if the discipline keeps me separated from some people who are without discipline, nevertheless I will carry on. I may have different ways and a different standard of living than some others. I may be actuated by different motives than some people. But I will try to live the way I believe God wants me to live, no matter what others say.

Prayer For The Day

I pray that I may be an example to others of a better way of living. I pray that I may carry on in spite of hindrances.

As Bill Sees It

"The Spiritual Angle", p. 101

How often do we sit in A.A. meetings and hear the speaker declare,

"But I haven't yet got the spiritual angle." Prior to this statement, he has described a miracle of transformation which has occurred in him--not only his release from alcohol, but a complete change in his whole attitude toward life and the living of it.

It is apparent to everyone else present that he has received a great gift, and that this gift is all out of proportion to anything that may be expected from simple A.A. participation. So we in the audience smile and say to ourselves, "Well, that guy is just reeling with the spiritual angle--except that he doesn't seem to know it yet!"

Grapevine, July 1962
Walk In Dry Places

Helping Others—Motives

It may sound selfish, but you should always help others for no reason other than your own benefit. In giving assistance, guard against posing as an idealist or even a Good Samaritan. We are not saints, and our spiritual progress is interrupted the moment we begin to act more saintly than we really are.

Two things happen when we help others in the full knowledge that we are really helping only ourselves. First, we do not place the other person in a demeaning role or make him or her obligated to us. Second, we sidestep the swollen egotism that could arise if we view ourselves as rescuers.

In helping others, we are only passing on the good that has come to us. Any good action will always bring rich rewards in personal well-being. People we have helped will be grateful to us when it becomes clear that we don't demand their gratitude. They will also be inspired to follow this example, which is the true AA spirit that became evident with the first Twelve Step calls.

I'll look for opportunities to help others in the same way that a businessman looks for ways to increase profits. I know that I grow as a person when I help others in the right spirit.

Keep It Simple

Many of us as children, were taught to hide our pain, to act as if we had none. We look for ways to hide our pain. Alcohol and other drugs helped us do this. But the pain always returned. We were ashamed that we hurt. We thought we were the only one who hurt so badly. and, worst of all, we thought our pain meant we were bad people. Ours is a program of honesty. As we live life, there will be troubles, and there will be pain. But now we know that we don't try to hide it. If we hide our wounds, they will not heal. We will listen to others pain and ask them to listen to ours. This will help us continue our journey in recovery.

Prayer for the Day: God, help me be honest about my pain. Help me see pain not as a personal defect, but as a part of life.

Action for the Day: I'll share my pain with a friend, a family member, my group, or sponsor. I'll ask them to do the same with me. I'll think of pain as part of life.

Each Day a New Beginning
An element of recovery is learning that we deserve success, the good things that come to us, and also that pain is a reality. We have the strength to deal with that pain without medicating, and it will pass. -- Dudley Martineau

Many of us didn't understand the changing variables in being human. Our coping skills were at a minimum until we discovered what alcohol or pills, even food, could do for us. And then, a drink or two--or six, maybe--got us through many a lonely evening.

The desire for an easy solution might still haunt us, but time, new experiences, and program friends have taught us that our past habits weren't really easy solutions. In reality, they increased our problems and led us nowhere.

The Steps and the principles of the program, if applied, guarantee success, living success. We come to believe that strength enough to handle any situation is ours for the asking. And experience with these principles shows us that when we live the way our conscience dictates, the rewards are many.

Every day, especially this one facing us, our choices and decisions will be many. But there is only one solution to any problem, and that's the one our higher power guides us to. The answer, the choice, always lies within, and the good life will accompany our thoughtful, reverent choices.

The power of the program is mine for the taking. All of today's problems can be eased, if I choose so.

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**NA Just For Today**

A Closed Mind

"A new idea cannot be grafted onto a closed mind... Open-mindedness leads us to the very insights that have eluded us during our lives."

Basic Text p. 93

We arrived in NA at the lowest point in our lives. We'd just about run out of ideas. What we needed most when we got here were new ideas, new ways of living, shared from the experience of people who'd seen those ideas work. Yet our closed minds prevented us from taking in the very ideas we needed to live.

Denial keeps us from appreciating just how badly we really need new ideas and new direction. By admitting our powerlessness and recognizing how truly unmanageable our lives have become, we allow ourselves to see how much we need what NA has to offer.
Self-dependence and self-will can keep us from admitting even the possibility of the existence of a Power greater than ourselves. However, when we admit the sorry state self-will has gotten us into, we open our eyes and our minds to new possibilities. When others tell us of a Power that has brought sanity to their lives, we begin to believe that such a Power may do the same for us.

A tree stripped of its branches will die unless new branches can be grafted onto its trunk. In the same way, addiction stripped us of whatever direction we had. To grow or even to survive, we must open our minds and allow new ideas to be grafted onto our lives.

Just for today: I will ask my Higher Power to open my mind to the new ideas of recovery.

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Today's Gift

Listen to your feelings. They tell you when you need to take care of yourself, like finding a friend if you feel lonely, crying if you feel sad, singing and smiling if you feel happy, and acting frisky if you feel good. --Pat Palmer

When we get too much of anything--too much fun or too much work--we may feel really crummy when it's over.

One way to listen to our crummy feelings is to say, "Here comes the letdown after all that fun." We can imagine a spaceship falling to earth, floating on the ocean. Coming down to earth is as much a part of the adventure as the countdown and blastoff.

A letdown for us means we need to let our bodies and minds rest, just like the spaceship, bobbing around without any special direction. We need to take it easy, do nothing, put off making plans.

Then we can ask God to help us let go of the crummy feelings that come along with a letdown. We can ask the spirit within us to guide us through this time of change. Then we will let down and let go.

What are some things I can do to take it easy the next time I feel down?

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Touchstones

I have learned this: it is not what one does that is wrong, but what one becomes as a consequence of it. --Oscar Wilde

There are countless ways to take shortcuts in life or to grab for pleasures. We could cheat on our income taxes, excuse a food binge, or lie to a loved one about where we've been. We say, "It won't hurt anyone!" "I wouldn't do it if it weren't for the other guy." Or, "Everyone does it." But if we are to like and respect
ourselves, we need to live by the rules we believe in. Whether we get caught or not isn't the point. We cannot hold values and then repeatedly justify breaking them.

What does it do to us if we constantly fudge on our values? It undermines our self-esteem and damages the faith we have in ourselves. We do not expect to be perfect, but we must be accountable. If we are honest with ourselves, we admit our wrongs and reestablish our self-respect.

Today, I will take care to make choices that match my values.

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The Language Of Letting Go

Financial Goals

Taking responsibility for our financial affairs will improve our self-esteem and lessen anxiety.

Each of us, today, has a present set of financial circumstances. We have a certain amount of money in hand, and money due to us. We have a pile of bills that we owe. We have taxes to pay. Those are our present financial circumstances. No matter what the details are, acceptance, gratitude, and self-responsibility will lessen the stress.
Each of us, today, has a financial future. There are few future aspects of our life we can control, but one part we can play to assist our future is setting goals.

We don't have to obsess about our goals. We don't have to constantly watch and mark our progress toward them. But it is beneficial to think about our goals and write them down. What do we want to happen in our financial future? What financial problems would we like to solve? What bills would we like to be rid of? What would we like to be earning at the end of this year? The end of next year? Five years from now?

Are we willing to work for our goals and trust our Higher Power to guide us?

Pay bills on time. Contact creditors. Make arrangements. Do your best, today, to take responsibility for your finances. Set goals for the future. Then, let go of money and concentrate on loving. Taking responsibility for our financial affairs does not mean making money our focus. Taking responsibility for our finances enables us to take our focus off money. It frees us to do our work and live the life we want.

We deserve to have the self-esteem and peace that accompanies financial responsibility.

Today, I will take the time necessary to be responsible for myself financially. If it is time to pay bills or talk to creditors, I will do that. If it is time to set goals, I will do that. Once I have done my part, I will let the rest go.

The more I let go of my own suffering and self-pity, I can see those around me with the eyes of love and compassion. I am becoming more aware of other people's pain and unhappiness today and I will reach out to them in loving ways that heal me while helping them to heal. --Ruth Fishel

Journey To The Heart

Learn to Listen to Silence

Driving into Yellowstone Park, I switched off the radio. The sun was setting. The mountains on either side of the road framed my view. Snowcapped mountains, their peaks touching the clouds, reflected the peach, pink, and orange of the setting sun. The clouds were beginning to change color, the way they do at twilight. Evergreens lined the road. Some stood tall. Some stooped. Some bent, as if peeking at or beckoning the travelers on the road. The smell of pine gently filled the car.

Because I'd been driving all day, I had kept the radio on to keep me alert and entertained. Now, I shut it off. As I drove, I let the silence fill the car, fill my mind, fill my soul. Before long, the colors of the sunset began to almost sing. The trees, the mountains filled me with their energy, rhythm, vibration.
Certain sounds can be healing - music, the voice of a friend, the laughter of a child. But there are other times when we need to turn down the sound and listen to silence. Silence can be healing, too.

As the sun set and I drove through the gates of Yellowstone Park, I realized this: the sounds of silence aren’t silent. Each creation that lives sings its own song. It takes a quiet mind, a quiet soul, a quiet heart to hear these songs.

Learn to listen to silence. Listen to the world around you. And the silence will sing you a beautiful song.

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More Language Of Letting Go

Let yourself change and grow

There are lots of hermit crabs in the tide pools near my house. They’re interesting little creatures. A hermit crab will find a shell that fits him, put it on, and live in it. After a while, he grows and the shell no longer fits, so the crab scurries along the sea floor and finds another shell to live in. He crawls out of his first shell and into the shell that fits his new needs. This scene repeats itself again and again throughout his life.

Learn a lesson from the hermit crabs.

Just because a decision was right for you yesterday, doesn’t mean it meets your needs today. People grow. People change. And sometimes we have to let our safe little places go, in order to grow and change.

Are you holding on to something that doesn’t work anymore, just because it’s safe and what you know? It could be a behavior pattern - such as feeling victimized in all your relationships or wearing yourself out trying to control what you can’t.

Thank the lessons, people, and places of the past for all they’ve taught you. Thank your survival behaviors for helping you cope. There’s nothing wrong with feeling comfortable and safe - having lifetime friends and a career that serves us well. But don’t get so comfortable that you can’t let go and move on when it’s time. If the walls are too confining and limiting and you’re feeling stuck and bored, maybe it’s time to get out and find a new shell. There’s another shell waiting that will fit you better, but you can’t move into it until you leave this one behind.
God, show me the behaviors, things, people, and places that I've outgrown. Then give me the faith to let go.

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A Day at a Time

Reflection For The Day

I came; I came to; I came to believe. The Program has enabled me to learn that deep down in every man, woman and child is the fundamental idea of a God. It may be obscured by pomp, by calamity, by worship of other things, but in some form or other it is there. For faith in a Power greater than ourselves, and miraculous demonstrations of the Power in human lives are facts as old as man himself. How well do I share my free gifts?

Today I Pray

I pray that I may continue to look for - and find - that Godliness that is in me and in every other person, no matter how it is obscured. May I be aware that the consciousness of a Higher Power has been present in man since he was first given the power to reason, no matter what name he gave to it or how he sought to reach it. May my own faith in a Higher Power be reinforced by the experience of all mankind - and by the working of His gracious miracles in my own life.

Today I Will Remember

God is in us all.

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One More Day

When you get into a tight place, and everything goes against you, till it seems as though you could not hold on a moment longer, never give up then, for that is just the place and time that the tide will turn.

- Harriet Beecher Stowe
Sometimes we push ourselves too fast, too far, too often. Even though we are cognizant of that exact moment when we just cannot, physically or emotionally, go on any longer, we still persevere.

When we finally do acknowledge that again we have gone too far, it may be time to take a nap or exercise to release our emotions. Or we may choose to be with friends or family. We begin to understand that the bad times pass.

If we can just make it through one more moment, then the tables will turn in our favor.

I am able to make it through even the hardest hard day.

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Food For Thought

Deliverance

OA is here to say that compulsive overeaters have been delivered from compulsive overeating! We have found a way of eating that delivers us from fat and, even more important, we have found a way of living that delivers us from fear.

The price is high. We find that in order for the program to work, we need to give ourselves completely to it. We have proven over and over that half measures do not succeed. Unless we keep our will and our lives entirely in the hands of our Higher Power, we will fall back into the trap of compulsive overeating and compulsiveness in other areas.

Every day when we wake up, we give thanks for another day of abstinence, and we put ourselves under God's care and direction. We ask that we be guided in all our activities and that we may follow His will for us in all that we do. Then, whatever happens during the day, we accept it as part of God's plan, and we play our part as He directs us. The outcome and results belong to Him. We are delivered from self-centeredness and freed from compulsion.

We celebrate our deliverance.

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One Day At A Time

~ Meditation ~

When you are with others, be with them wholeheartedly.
But when you are by yourself, be alone with God.
Paramahansa Yogananda

When I pray to the God of my understanding, I am able to share my thoughts, to vent my feelings, to express my gratitude. But it isn't enough for me to speak to God. I also need to listen. That's where meditation comes in.

Sometimes I select a passage from program literature to meditate on. I read the passage, and then sit quietly and allow my Higher Power to help me make connections between what I've read and the life I'm leading.

Other times, I will pick a word or phrase, like "love" or "peace" and repeat it, over and over, in my mind. I allow myself to align with the feeling of that word.

I may picture a serene place, and mentally go there, to rest and regroup from the pressures of the day.

I also will sometimes sit quietly, "in the silence," as the Quakers say. I listen to my breath moving in and out of my body, and I allow my Higher Power to speak to my heart.

No matter which meditation practice I select, the important thing for me is to do it faithfully, every day, and to totally give myself to it. I figure, if God can give to me, then I can give a little of myself back to the One who has blessed me with this program.

One Day at a Time . . .
I will spend some quiet time alone with my Higher Power, and listen to that still, small voice within.
~ Jeff ~

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**Hour To Hour - Book - Quote**

To want a fix, pill, drink, smoke, or snort is not bad, it is a perfectly normal state of being for an addict. But each hour we stay clean eventually makes a day. Each day brings us closer to health of body, mind, and spirit. Eventually 'craving' our chemicals will not be normal, but a thing of our diseased past.

Let me know that the state of craving my drug of choice will one day be replaced with feeling my true emotions.

I Thank You God

For most this amazing day, for the leafy, greenly spirits of trees, and everything which is infinite, which is beautiful, which is yes. I who have died am alive again today and this is the sun's birthday.

- Tian Dayton PhD

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**Pocket Sponsor - Book - Quote**

Sobriety is a grant, not a gift. A gift is something we get to keep forever. A grant is contingent on us doing something to keep it.

I work steps because my recovery is 'contingent on the maintenance of {my} spiritual program.' (P 85, AA Book)

"Walk Softly and Carry a Big Book" - Book

Enforce the 'Respect-me rules'

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**Time for Joy - Book - Quote**
The more I let go of my own suffering and self-pity, I can see those around me with the eyes of love and compassion. I am becoming more aware of other people's pain and unhappiness today and I will reach out to them in loving ways that heal me while helping them to heal.

Alkiespeak - Book - Quote

I remember that first drink and feeling so surprised and amazed and delighted. And I think of how many alcoholics are dying right now trying somehow, some way to re-create that moment. - Charlie C.

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AA Thought for the Day

Turn It Over
Any of us can handle just one day;
all each of us has to try at is our own job, our own family life.
We don't have to try fixing up the whole world or understanding what no theologian of any faith has ever understood.
We simply stop messing in God's business. . .
when we stop messing and worrying, we have turned our will and our lives over to God (or Good) as we understand (or don't understand) Him.
- Came To Believe . . ., p. 116

Thought to Ponder . . .
God seldom becomes a reality until God becomes a necessity.

AA-related 'Alconym' . . .
G O D = Good Orderly Direction.

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Father Leo's Daily Meditation

PRINCIPLES

"Nothing can bring you peace but the triumph of principles. "
--Ralph Waldo Emerson

Slowly I am understanding what principles are in my life. I am learning to live with code of ethics that I do not always like, but I know is good for me and others. Although I do not always fully understand the "spiritual principles" of life, I know that my ongoing recovery should be based upon them.

Some of the "spiritual principles" by which I try to live are: Honesty, Truth, Openness, Forgiveness, Acceptance, Humility and Hope.

I am also experiencing a personal satisfaction in knowing that I am living today with a set of principles that work. They enable me to be a feeling and loving human being. Today I am beginning to feel what I always thought other people had. Today I am alive in my life.

May Your principles be my lifestyle.

"God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."
1 Corinthians 1:9

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.
Ephesians 6:12

The peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
Philippians 4:7

"Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!"
Philippians 4:4

Daily Inspiration

Discover how really nice today is by taking it less for granted. Lord, thank you for my health, my friends, my abilities and the people who enrich my life and I theirs.

Not one day passes without receiving wonderful blessings from our loving and generous God. Lord, may I forget the irritations that distract me from Your happiness.

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