

CONSCIOUS CONTACT

INFORMATION AND INSPIRATION

VOL 24 NO 09



I am An Alcoholic

By Lynn P.

Disclaimer: This article contains content discussing sexual abuse and violence.

I grew up as the poster child of a sad, little girl from a dysfunctional family. Short, fat, with a ton of acne. Always being made fun of and teased. When I cried to my parents, it was the old, “sticks and stones.” As a child, I was molested by a family doctor for about three years. I could not tell my family for fear of them blaming me. I was six to nine years old. Maybe they found out since the doctor suddenly disappeared. I was about eight when I tried my first suicide. I went into the medicine cabinet and took all the pretty pills. I woke up the next day being mad –I did the right thing and God did not let me die, so I thought. My parents did nothing but fight all the time; yelling and screaming at each other, and at me. Not a pretty memory to have.

I am not an only child but it sure felt like it. “What is said in the house, stays in the house.” Of course, the whole neighborhood knew our business. I learned at an early age to isolate. Do not trust anyone. Do not talk to anyone and let them know my feelings. I would just get hurt for letting go. We went to temple every Friday night – my brother, father and I. I believe that was the highlight of my week. I felt like I belonged to a family. I knew God was there with me as I prayed and sang. Eventually, that also disappeared. I honestly believe my mother was jealous of us going since she wanted to stay home all the time. All for the better, it turned out. Sharing was not to be in my life.

I remember my first drink. It was during the holidays and there was wine. Someone gave it to me and I loved it. I was around nine years old. I remember the warm feeling it gave me from my head to my toes. I, of course, was too young to understand any of this. I just knew I could be silly and everyone would laugh and tell me how cute I was. Anytime my parents had a party, I always asked for a sip of whatever. When I was around twelve, my mother’s friend’s son tried to molest me. I was able to get out of that situation since it was at my mother’s place of work. I, again, was molested in a field I was walking through with a girlfriend. She told me to just let it happen as she was giggling. How funny about only remembering the bad times in my life. I really started drinking around sixteen. I was fat, sad and in total denial about my life. I needed an out and I needed it quick. The gang I hung with didn’t really care about me, but I was able to get either money or booze. I felt accepted. They were greasers and I wanted to do belong to something, anything but my own life. We drank and did drugs as often as possible. I was introduced to a world that would embrace me and made me feel relief. I graduated to down and dirty bikers. I had arrived. The drinking was 24/7 and my family was oblivious to my life.

By now, I had dropped out – or should I say, was kicked out – of high school. I did not belong to the real life anymore. One night, I was with a girlfriend and we were with the men of our dreams, so I thought. That night, I will never forget. I was drug raped. Well, so much for my virginity. I hated that boy and myself forever, until I learned to forgive. That is the most important step I learned in this program. I cannot accept myself holding onto all the resentments I have. He was as sick as I was. This program has taught me that the past is the past and I cannot change it. I can change myself, and what a blessing that is. Well, life went on and I left the gang.

So, did I come back to the reality of living? Of course not. I started hanging with the hippies. Peace, love, sex, drugs and rock n’ roll. Moved to San Francisco (Haight-Asbury). That is where I learned the fine art of shooting. Living from place-to-place was fun at the time. No place to call mine, nothing to tie me down. Oh, by the way, I was holding down a job this whole time. I don’t know how, but I always had money. Of course, prostituting helped out for extra income. Always able to buy my friends. I was at the top of the world, or garbage heap. Leave that to your imagination. Let’s just say, I had been there and done that to the extreme.

I moved home from the slums after my grandmother died. My mother decided to talk to me after two years. My father talked to me since my mother did. I got a respectable job and worked hard at it. Of course, I was still working hard at my drinking. My life got worse as my drug addiction got worse. Missing work so much that I had to quit. Unemployment ran out, so again, I had to work. This time I got a job at The Ambassador Hotel in Chicago. My two best friends were a gay girl and the bartender at The Pump Room. Well, you can just imagine where I had breakfast and lunch every day. This also showed me a new world of people. It was a turn on. This went on for five years.

One day, I had too much of a mixture of drink and drugs and had a slight misunderstanding with the boss. Again, I was without any stability. I had also given up on God by this point. I was living with a very abusive, speed-freak, alcoholic who loved to beat on me. Sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly, but I finally left him. I slowed down for a while and got a job at a gas station distribution outlet. There, I met a man I could not stand. In order to keep him off my back, I went on three dates with him. All three dates I threw up all over his car, proving I could drink more than him. But he did not do drugs, so I married him. Our marriage was a violent one. Twenty-five years of drinking together and apart. I had been in twenty years of therapy, but not once did I tell anyone I had a drinking problem. I did not, as far as I was concerned, my husband did. I could not tell of the several times I tried to kill myself.

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I did not want to live anymore like I was. I guess God said I was ready to do my thing. I found a psychologist that I could be honest with. Dr. B told me I needed to do volunteer work instead of staying home getting high. Imagine that, me doing volunteer work. I told him I would rather go to A.A., so I did.

I do not remember my first step meeting as I was high for the first four months of my time in the program. My Higher Power and the people of A.A. kept telling me to come back. One night, when I didn't want to live anymore, I had my spiritual experience (butcher knife and chopping block). Everything I ever heard in A.A. went through my mind like a movie reel before you die. I ran to the A.A. meeting and stayed sober for six months. What happened? I got cocky. I could drink again like a normal person. I did not need meetings or to call my sponsor. I did not need spiritual guidance either. Well, I called Doc B. and he told me to make phone calls to my regular doctor, my rabbi and – the hardest of all – my sponsor.

Life for me has not been all happy, joyous and free since being sober for over five years now. But I have learned the tools to cope in the sober world. For the most part, I have found friends that I can love and trust – two words I never knew before. I can look at myself in the mirror and smile at the person I am looking at. My life, sober, has been a blessing in the most awesome way. I learned to love myself as you taught me. I never thought I would get such joy out of helping others. I am a sponsor with three sponsees. I have a smile on my face and in my heart most of the time. Will I ever drink again? Only my Higher Power knows that. God, I pray not. I have learned to forgive others and see what my part in my resentments are. I can see the sunlight of the day without squinting. I would not give up my beautiful life today for anything. I am happy, sober and in a good place. I need to thank my Higher Power, my sponsors (past and present), my friends and all the meetings I go to. I was very fortunate to have a supportive husband, who even though he is not in the program, stands by me. I thank God for all He has given me, all He has taken and all He has left me.

Well, this is my story and I am proud of it. Proud of myself most of all. My name is Lynn Ellen Pikrone and I am an alcoholic.

Editor's Note: This article was written on 6/30/2009 and was submitted in 2024; Lynn P. has been sober since 6/30/2004.

Zoya

By Hope L.

Gone too soon
It was too short for me
But life is in God's time
He decides when to set us free...
She touched so many lives
Her wisdom helped me to see.

I didn't know her long
But our souls connected
Her sobriety was solid
She was divinely directed
I will miss her laughter
The sparkle shining in her eyes
I will miss her shares, her joy
She touched so many lives.

I admired her courage
Her strength and bravery
She fought like a warrior
She beat her slavery -
The chains of addiction no longer held her down
I imagine her in clouds and fields of gold & brown.

Sunflowers, tall, strong, waving in the wind
I look forward one day
To seeing you again
You are missed here
Dearest Zoya
Dwell in peace, beloved friend.



In Loving Memory
of our sober friend,
Zoya Mete
August 11, 1971 –
August 1, 2024

Facing the Music: The Necessity of Step 9

By Daniel D.

Quite frankly, Step 9 sucks. When I think of Step 9, "Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others," I think of the line out of the 12 & 12 chapter on Step 1, "Who wants to confess his faults and make restitution for harm done?" I sure as hell don't! However, the collective wisdom of the program and the people in it have taught me that this is a crucial step if we are to stay sober. Clearing the wreckage of the past is necessary if we are to look at the world in a different light and grow as people spiritually and in practice.

I'm grateful to have worked this step closely with my sponsor, who gave me direction on making amends with people. He guided me on what to say and helped me discern those on my Step 8 list whom I would cause more harm to by making amends. Some amends are best served by living clean and sober. Actions speak louder than words, and that has been my experience with this step. I could say all the right things, but to make amends to those I had severely harmed as a result of my actions while drinking, I've found it's best to show rather than tell. They have been able to see a profound personality change in me since I joined A.A.

My biggest takeaway from Step 9: I don't want to do it again. God knows while I was drinking, I made countless promises I couldn't keep. I used

to promise myself that tomorrow would be the day I would stop drinking. Tomorrow never came. It only came when I stopped running the show myself and followed the steps, direction, and suggestions that have been passed down through the program. I also think of the 9th step promises on page 83 and 84 of the Big Book:

"If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are halfway through. We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness. We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace. No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others. That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear. We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows. Self-seeking will slip away. Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change. Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us. We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us. We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves. Are these extravagant promises?"

I know they sound extravagant, but I can honestly say that these have come true in my life, thanks to Step 9 and the program of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Events

SEPTEMBER 14TH 11:30 A.M. TO 12:30 P.M.
GSR Workshop
 SERENITY HOUSE, 1103 W. PARK AVENUE, LIBERTYVILLE, IL

OCTOBER 4-6TH
Conscious Contact Retreat
 ARRIVAL: 10/4 5:30-7:00 P.M. (PIZZA AT 6:30 P.M.)
 DEPART: 10/6 @ 10:00 A.M.

Who: A.A. members (age 18+)

SIENA RETREAT CENTER
 5637 ERIE STREET, RACINE, WI 53402

www.sienaretreatcenter.org

Cost \$305.00 (includes meals & lodging).

Attendance limited to 50 people & full payment is required to be registered. Bring a snack, drinks to share & warm/comfy clothing.

To register, send name, e-mail & phone number along with payment to one of the following:

Zelle 630-450-2074

Venmo.....Tom-W-8

Mail check payable to Siena Retreat Center

c/o MJD, 29201 N. Fairfield Rd., Mundelein, IL 60060

*****NO REFUNDS AFTER SEPTEMBER*****

OCTOBER 20TH
2024 Fall Breakfast – hosted by D10
 PARKWAY BANQUETS SALON
 657 RAILROAD AVENUE, ROUND LAKE

Coffee 8:30 a.m.
 Breakfast 9:00-10:00 a.m.
 Speaker Mark H.
 50/50 Raffle. \$25.00
 Tickets. Cindy C. 224-234-0051

NOVEMBER 9TH 8:00 TO 3:30 P.M.
2024 Big Book Conference hosted by NIA 20
 FIRST COVENANT CHURCH
 316 WOOD ROAD, ROCKFORD, IL

Doors: 8:00 a.m. Conference: 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
 Cost \$15.00 cash or card
 Lunch \$15.00
 Registration aa-nia.org/bigbookconference
 Spanish Interpretation available

NOVEMBER 22ND TO 24TH
McHenry's Soberfest "We Will Be Amazed"
 THE GRAND GENEVA RESORT
 7036 GRAND GENEVA WAY, LAKE GENEVA, WI

Registration www.soberfest.org
 Speakers, panels, banquet, Alcathon, Alateen,
 Al-Anon, dance & more

All GSRs & District Committee Chairs:

PLEASE TAKE THE NIA20 GSR / SERVICE INVENTORY
 BY SEPTEMBER 7TH. Can be found at aa-nia.org below
 icons for Area 20 and District Contacts

All Answering Service Volunteers

Not available to take a call during your 24/7 week?

----- DO -----

- Turn phone off BEFORE your phone rings.
- Put phone in airplane mode BEFORE your phone rings.
- If your phone rings, allow phone to ring (will ring 4x).
- All of the above will allow the caller seeking help to reach the next volunteer in line.

----- DO NOT -----

- Turn off your phone or put it into airplane mode as your phone is ringing.
- Send a message to the caller ("I will call you back").
- The above will disrupt the volunteer chain, cause a help call not to be answered, send caller to your personal voicemail, and/or disclose your personal phone number.

Thank you for your service! -Felicia J. & James M.

Meeting Spotlights

Bonfire Meeting ANTIOCH RECOVERY CLUB

3rd Saturday of every month @ 8:00 p.m.
 Bring a chair!

Gateway – Lake Villa – Fridays

Men @ 7:00-8:00 p.m. Women @ 7:00-8:30 p.m.

ATP – Waukegan – Co-ed

Mondays & Fridays @ 7:30-8:30 p.m.
 Saturdays @ 10:00 a.m.

WRS – Vernon Hills – Women

Thursdays @ 7:30-8:30 p.m.

Treatment Monthly Workshop

3RD THURSDAY OF THE MONTH AT 7:00 P.M.

ID: 994 296 7947 Password: redbook (all lowercase)
 Contact Area 20 Treatment Chair, Kevin A.
 bbkevin8@gmail.com, 224-201-8978

C.C. requests short prayers and meditation tips that you find helpful in your daily practice. **Deadline: 10/14.**
 Please submit to: newsletter@district10nia.org

Step 9: Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

Tradition 9: A.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

Concept 9: Good service leadership at all levels is indispensable for our future functioning and safety. Primary world service leadership, once exercised by the founders, must necessarily be assumed by the trustees.

D10 Updates

- There are **ten (10) D10 OPEN committee positions**. Accessibilities is without a Chair or Alternate Chair. Our Secretary is seeking an Alternate Chair. All OPEN positions can be found below.
- **D10 meeting contributions**
from 6/23/24 to 7/25/24.....**\$1,218.89**
- Is your meeting or club house **out of directories?** Please reach out to our Directories Chair, Brian B.
- Looking for delegate and/or Area 20 committee reports, updates and agendas?
Visit aa-nia.org/delegate/ and aa-nia.org/agendas/
- Area 20 Delegate, Eric L., presented details from the 74th General Service Conference at the 7/28 District 10 meeting. Eric's final conference report can be found at **aa-nia.org/agendas/ by clicking "2024 Summer Assembly Delegate Presentation (ES)"**
- Would you/your group be **interested in donating a gift basket for the D10 Fall breakfast** being held on 10/20? Please reach out to our Events Chair, Cindy C.
- Corrections meetings are happening at Lake County Jail. **Volunteers needed!** Monday & Thursday 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. Documents are live & downloadable via the link at: <https://district10nia.org/committees/corrections-committee/>

Serenity's Embrace

By Anonymous

A tempest raged within, a stormy sea,
Where shadows danced and reason could not be.
Bound by a phantom, lost in endless night,
A prisoner of shadows, void of light.
But dawn emerged, a gentle, soft caress,
Dispelling darkness, bringing sweet redress.
The chains unbound, the spirit soared and free,
A phoenix rising, wild and joyfully.
A gentle heart, a spirit kind and true,
Whose laughter echoed, like morning dew.
Now rests in peace, a journey's final bend,
A cherished memory, a steadfast friend.
Though absence pains, and sorrow's tears may fall,
A sense of peace envelops us all.
For in this quietude, a beauty gleams,
A soul at rest, fulfilled in life's sweet dreams.

CONTENT DEADLINE MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 16. Any A.A. may contribute. **1.** Go to district10nia.org. **2.** Click "District Services and Committees", then "Newsletter". **3.** Provide name, email or phone, in case of questions. **4.** Type/Paste your content. Click "Select". That's it! **WEBSITES** www.district10nia.org www.aa-nia.org www.aa.org www.aagrapevine.org
DISTRICT 10 P.O. Box 854, Libertyville, IL 60048 **NORTHERN ILLINOIS AREA 20** P.O. Box 808, Streamwood, IL 60107
GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE James A. Farley Station, P.O. Box 2407 New York, NY 10163 aa.org/aa-contributions-self-support
Opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the opinions of A.A., NIA, District 10 or Conscious Contact volunteers.

877-893-1212

**DISTRICT 10 ANSWERING SERVICE
VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!**

Next District Meeting

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 22 **St. Gilbert Catholic Church Grayslake, IL**
5:30 p.m. Traditions Meeting **6:00 p.m. Hybrid Meeting**