

"A Publication for, of and by the Chemically Dependent"

SOBRIETY VS. RECOVERY THE EDITOR

I have always loved a good debate. Because of my lifestyle today, where I live, where I work and the people around me, I find myself frequently talking about recovery and sobriety. What a novel idea, right? I hear people use the words "recovery" and "sobriety" interchangeably in meetings and conversations and I always wonder if we all understand the *massive* difference between the two.

Sobriety, or abstinence from alcohol & drug use, in one hand and recovery from alcoholism & addiction in the other represent two very different states. Sometimes the boundaries between the two become blurred, but they're definitely there.

Some alcoholics and addicts become sober but do not enter recovery. Clean, but not recovering, alcoholics and addicts tend to maintain abstinence from alcohol and drugs because to drink and/or use again would most likely cause more problems. We don't enjoy being sober and clean, miss getting high, and feel disappointed in or angry about being abstinent. We maintain abstinence through willpower and believe that strong willpower is adequate for continued abstinence. We would like to drink and/or use again and would do so if reasonably sure that prior problems would not recur.

Some alcoholics and addicts are not only sober but also in recovery. Recovering alcoholics and addicts usually maintain abstinence from alcohol and drugs because to drink and/or use again would compromise the quality of life found in sobriety. We enjoy being sober and clean and feel grateful for sobriety. We utilize resources instead of, or in addition to willpower to maintain sobriety and to learn healthier ways to think, feel, and act. We have no desire to drink or use again and would not do so even if reasonably sure that problems would not recur.

My path in recovery, like most others, started with maintaining sobriety one day at a time because *I was afraid* of going back to the life I had in addiction and alcoholism. At a certain point though, with the continued pursuit of things like 12 step meetings, support groups,

service work, and meditation, I stopped hiding from the past in abstinence and started running to the bright future in recovery. The change happened because I was ready, I took suggestions, I was open-minded, and I was honest with my true self.

As an abstinent addict I was looking for a quick-fix for my problem where as a person living in recovery, I seek, desire and expect to find a new way of living without the need for any crutches in my life. Sobriety may cure back problems (getting my freedom back, money back, family back) but it does not address the underlying causes of needing a mind-altering substance in the first place. As a person seeking true recovery, I recognize the truth about myself, that is, that there was some kind of problem that existed prior to seeking out drugs or alcohol initially.

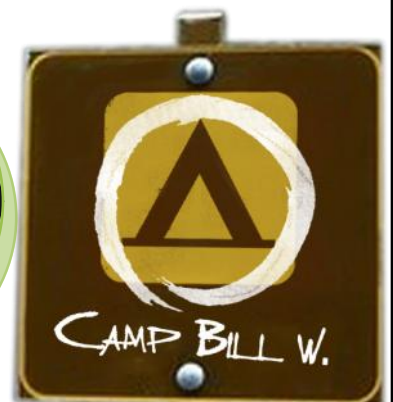
The bottom line is this and nothing less: Moving out of alcoholism & addiction, through abstinence, and into recovery does not happen by accident or by magic. It requires awareness, time, patience, and above all - **action**.

Am I *aware* of where I am and where I want to be on my personal journey toward recovery?

Am I willing to *commit* at least half of the time I used to spend thinking about or using drugs/alcohol on my personal recovery?

Am I willing to *wait* for the traditions to start coming true without giving up?

Am I *willing* to do something, anything, to help myself?



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1) Sobriety vs. Recovery
- 2) Spiritual Experience
- 3) Addictive Writings
- 4) Upcoming Events

Editor.....Anthony D.

Thanks to.....Mike McC.

.....Aldo C.

.....Chris W.

.....Holcombe H.

.....Myra B. W.

ALUMNI NEWS

Alumni Meetings*Every Monday*

Do you want to be part of our Association? Do you have any ideas about events we can put on?
Come to the Alumni Meetings every Monday at 6 PM in the EAI Meeting Hall!

Questions about upcoming events?

Call Anthony D. (713) 695-8403 or email anthony@extended-aftercare.com

SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE! Chances are that if you have been around the EAI Alumni, you have heard the phrase “Spiritual Experience” shouted out seemingly at random. Sometimes a Spiritual Experience is as simple as making my bed in the morning rather than leaving a mess like I did in my addiction. Sometimes it is doing the next right thing without even having to think about it. For those of us who have remained a part of this fellowship for some time now, a true Spiritual Experience can always be found at the **Livingston Campout**.

It is not every day that I have the opportunity to wake up to chirping birds and waves lapping at the shore, walk down to a hill covered in soft grass to watch the sun rise while listening to the hope of men with the experience of long term recovery. I cherish those days for the rest of the year. I can't count the days where I have wished I could do nothing but fish, lay in the sun and have fun with my brothers and sisters in recovery.

On April 29th we are going back to Lake Livingston State Park for the 2011 Campout. The three day adventure is always one of the best recovery events the Alumni holds throughout the year. I hope to see everyone at the lake, with open hearts and minds, ready to fill their washtubs full of recovery!

**MY EXPERIENCE—MIKE MCC.**

Before coming to EAI I didn't think it was possible to not only live sober but to have fun in sobriety. Since I have been here I have found a reason to live again and I am having the time of my life! I am involved with the car washes, horseshoe tournaments, bowling and all the other events the Alumni put on. I have learned to live and be part of the fellowship in a sober society.

Thanks EAI, you have saved my life.

“Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm.” **Ralph Waldo Emerson**

The personal stories of experience, strength, and hope in recovery that are included in *The Ragpicker* come from individuals in and around the EAI Recovery Community.

If you have something you wish to submit to this publication for print, please contact **Anthony D.** at the EAI front office (713) 695-8403 or email to anthony@extended-aftercare.com

ADDICTIVE WRITINGS

A GIFT—CHRIS W. When I was a kid, I never played any kind of sports and was into drugs and alcohol before I was in my teens. During those times, I lied and stole from my parents on numerous occasions. My first month at EAI, I went with some of my fellow clients to play SRC Softball.

The park was near my family’s home so I asked my parents who were babysitting my niece to bring her out so she could see me play. When they arrived I was already playing in the outfield so all three of them sat on the bleachers together. I guess my niece quickly became bored because within minutes she had my father escorting her to the playground. Not my mom though, she remained in the bleachers with a smile on her face so big I could literally see it from left center field.

I soon realized that not only had I stolen from them physically but I had also stolen from them emotionally. My mother never had a chance to see her little boy play ball it was a joy I had robbed her of. Although, at 30 years-old, I consider myself a man, in her eyes I’ll always be her little boy. So thanks to the EAI and the Alumni Association, she finally got to see me play ball and some of that joy was returned.

WORDS FROM HOUSE 1 —ALDO C.

- “Patience Takes Patience”
- “I used to spend all night getting my ducks in a row. Then one day I realized they weren't even my ducks!”
- “My addiction and lifestyle brought me to my knees. The place where my recovery began.”
- “Today, when fear rings my doorbell, my faith answers the door.”
- “Today I don’t have any problems! God however, has his hands full.”
- “I never know God’s schedule for me . But it is always on time!”



THE TOUCH OF THE MASTER’S HAND—MYRA B. W.

It was battered and scarred,
 And the auctioneer thought it
 hardly worth his while
 To waste his time on the old violin,
 but he held it up with a smile.
 "What am I bid, good people", he cried,
 "Who starts the bidding for me?"
 "One dollar, one dollar, Do I hear two?"
 "Two dollars, who makes it three?"
 "Three dollars once, three dollars twice,
 going for three",

But, No,
 From the room far back a grey bearded man
 Came forward and picked up the bow,
 Then wiping the dust from the old violin
 And tightening up the strings,

He played a melody, pure and sweet
 As sweet as the angel sings.

The music ceased and the auctioneer
 With a voice that was quiet and low,
 Said "What now am I bid for this old
 violin?"
 As he held it aloft with its' bow.
 "One thousand, one thousand, Do I hear
 two?"
 "Two thousand, Who makes it three?"
 "Three thousand once, three thousand
 twice,
 Going and gone", said he.

The audience cheered,
 But some of them cried,
 "We just don't understand."
 "What changed its' worth?"

Swift came the reply.
 "The Touch of the Master’s Hand."

And many a man with life out of tune
 All battered with bourbon and gin
 Is auctioned cheap to a thoughtless crowd
 Much like that old violin
 A mess of pottage, a glass of wine,
 A game and he travels on.
 He is going once, he is going twice,
 He is going and almost gone.
 But the Master comes,
 And the foolish crowd never can quite
 understand,
 The worth of a soul and the change that is
 wrought
By the Touch of the Master’s Hand.

"Fear is a natural reaction to moving closer to the truth." **Pema Chodron**

UPCOMING EVENTS

APRIL & MAY 2011

IntraCare Hospital AA	Every Thursday	6:30 pm - 8:30 pm	IntraCare (Meet @ Alumni House)
Car Wash	Every Saturday	10 am - 1 pm	EAI Office
Alumni Meeting	Every Monday	6:30 pm - 7:30 pm	EAI Meeting Hall
Newcomer Bowling	April 2	9 pm - 12 am	Del Mat Lanes (Meet @ EAI)
SRC Softball	April 3	8 am - 3 pm	PJ's Softball Park (Meet @ Hall)
Lyerly Cookoff	April 8- 10	All Day	Northside 24 Hour Club
Movie Night	April 9	9 pm - 11:30 pm	EAI Meeting Hall
Volleyball Tournament	April 10	10 am - 4 pm	EAI House 4
Head, Heart & Soul Workshop	April 13	6:30 pm - 8 pm	EAI Meeting Hall
Intergroup Phones	April 13	5 pm - 11 pm	EAI Alumni House
CA Convention Fundraiser	April 16	7 pm - 12:30 am	EAI Meeting Hall
Movie Night	April 23	9 pm - 11:30 pm	EAI Meeting Hall
Easter Family & Friends	April 24	12:30 pm - 2 pm	EAI Meeting Hall
AA Birthday Night	April 27	8 pm - 9 pm	EAI Meeting Hall
Livingston Campout	Apr. 29 - May 1	All Day	Lake Livingston State Park
Newcomer Bowling	May 7	9 pm - 12 am	Del Mat Lanes (Meet @ EAI)
Intergroup Phones	May 11	5 pm - 11 pm	EAI Alumni House
Movie Night	May 14	9 pm - 11:30 pm	EAI Meeting Hall
SRC Softball	May 15	8 am - 3 pm	PJ's Softball Park (Meet @ Hall)
Movie Night	May 21	9 pm - 11:30 pm	EAI Meeting Hall
Volleyball Tournament	May 22	10 am - 4 pm	EAI House 4
AA Birthday Night	May 25	8 pm - 9 pm	EAI Meeting Hall
Movie Night	May 28	9 pm - 11:30 pm	EAI Meeting Hall

FRIEND US
 Extended Aftercare, Inc. on Facebook and "soberfraternity" on Twitter provide you with up to date event reminders, news updates from the office, the Ragpicker online, and fliers that allows you to stay connected to your sober brotherhood anywhere in the world.



12-STEP MEETING SCHEDULE

MONDAY	8 pm	AA	Step Study
TUESDAY	8 pm	AA	Big Book Study
WEDNESDAY	8 pm	AA	Open Discussion
THURSDAY	8 pm	CA	Open Discussion
FRIDAY	7:30 pm	AA	Speaker
SATURDAY	8 pm	AA	Open Discussion
SUNDAY	6 pm	NA	Open Discussion
	7 pm	CA	Open Discussion

EAI and the Alumni Association remember our good friend and brother Kevin K.

Kevin graduated EAI in 2010 and was a outstanding member of our Alumni Association. He always had a kind word for everyone and made a point of coming back to see the newcomers in House 1 each time he visited us from Clear Lake. Kevin passed away peacefully in his sleep the night of March 18, 2011. He will be missed and we will always remember him as the Hero that he was.



The EAI Alumni is 100% dedicated to offering the best possible experiences and community to support the newcomer in recovery. As a not-for-profit organization, we rely on our fundraisers and donations from supporters like you! Any donation, monetary or otherwise, is tax deductible and will go towards helping us help others. Please contact Anthony D. at 713.695-8403 or anthony@extended-aftercare.com for more information.



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"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, therefore, is not an act but a habit." Aristotle