

Straight Talk

A publication of Fairview Riverside AA
U of M Medical Center

Meeting
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<http://www.aafairviewriverside.org/>

September - October 2019

Breathing Under Water: Spirituality and the Twelve Steps

The above titled book by Richard Rohr (2011) is based on his set of lectures linking the “wisdom of the Twelve Step Program with what St. Francis called the ‘marrow of the Gospel’.” The following excerpts focus on the twelfth step and the need for a “spiritual awakening” as part of AA “recovery.”

Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

“The Vital Spiritual Experience”

“... the Twelve Step Program often became a program of mere sobriety from a substance, and never moved many toward the ‘vital spiritual experience’ that Bill W deemed absolutely foundational for full recovery.” (p. xx)

“For Bill Wilson, there is no real or long-lasting recovery, no real sobriety, much less ‘emotional sobriety,’ without what he calls a ‘vital spiritual experience.’” In the second appendix to the *Big Book*, he distinguishes between his own frequent use of the terms ‘spiritual awakening’ and ‘vital spiritual experience.’ He rightly clarifies that most awakenings are not ‘in the nature of a sudden and spectacular upheaval,’ although even that is not infrequent. But usually they are of the ‘educational variety because they develop slowly over a period of time.’ One gradually ‘realizes that he [*sic*] has undergone a profound alteration in his reaction to life, and that such a change could hardly have been brought about by himself alone.’ Nor could it ‘have been accomplished by years of self-discipline.’ As usual, he (Bill W) is both helpful and brilliant here. (p. 112)

“What Breathing Under Water Might Really Be

... I am indeed saying that *only people who have suffered in some way can save one another*—exactly as the Twelve Step Program discovered. *Deep communion and dear compassion is formed much more by shared pain than by shared pleasure.* I do not know why this is true. We are not saved by any formulas or theologies or any priesthood extraneous to the human journey itself. ...

Only those who have tried to breathe under water know how important breathing really is, and will never take it for granted again. They are the ones who do not take shipwreck or drowning lightly, they are the ones who can name ‘healing’ correctly, they are the ones who know what they have been saved *from*, and the only ones who develop the patience and humility to ask the right questions of God and of themselves.

You see, *only the survivors know the full terror of the passage, the arms that held them through it all, and the power of the obstacles that were overcome.* All they can do is thank God they made it through! For all the rest of us it is mere speculation, salvation theories, and ‘theology.’ ...

Those who have passed over eventually find a much bigger world of *endurance, meaning, hope, self-esteem, deeper and true desire, but most especially, a bottomless pool of love both within and without.* Their treasure hunt is over, and they are home, and home free! (pp. 123 - 125)

A.A. Thought for the Day

“Practical experience shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking as extensive work with other alcoholics. Carry the message to other alcoholics. You can help them when no one else can. You can secure their confidence when others fail. Life will take on a new meaning for you.”

Twenty-Four Hours a Day (August 30)



"I AM RESPONSIBLE FOR MY OWN SOBRIETY"

“Breathing Under Water”

I built my house by the sea.
Not on the sands, mind you;
not on the shifting sand.



And I built it of rock.
A strong house
by a strong sea.

And we got well acquainted, the sea and I.
Good neighbors.

Not that we spoke much.

We met in silences.

Respectful, keeping our distance,
but looking our thoughts across the fence of sand.

Always the fence of sand our barrier,
always, the sand between.

And then one day,

- and I still don't know how it happened -
the sea came.

Without warning.

Without welcome, even

Not sudden and swift, but a shifting across the sand
like wine,

Less like the flow of water than the flow of blood.

Slow, but coming.

Slow, but flowing like an open wound.

And I thought of flight and I thought of drowning
and I thought of death.

And while I thought the sea crept higher, till it
reached my door.

And I knew then, there was neither flight, nor death,
nor drowning.

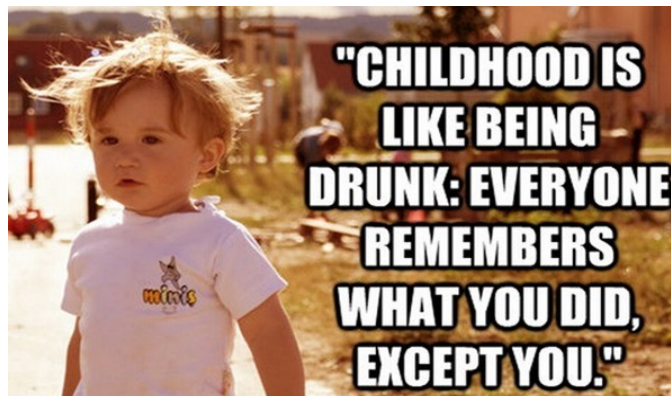
That when the sea comes calling you stop being
neighbors

Well acquainted, friendly-at-a-distance, neighbors

And you give your house for a coral castle,

And you learn to breathe underwater.

Carol Bieleck, R.S.C.J.



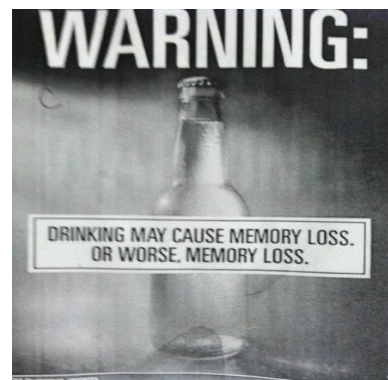
What About This Spiritual Awakening Thing?

The phrase “spiritual awakening,” found in the Twelfth Step and throughout A.A. literature, remains daunting to many beginners. For some, it conjures up a dramatic “conversion” experience – not an appealing idea to an alcoholic just coming off a drunk. To others, beaten down by years of steady drinking, it seems completely out of reach. But for those who persevere, ongoing sobriety almost invariably brings the realization that – in some wonderful and unexpected way – they have indeed experienced a spiritual change.

Spirituality, A.A. style, is the result of action. Step Twelve begins, “Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps. . .” and in the book *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* (page 106), Bill W. describes what happens: “Maybe there are as many definitions of spiritual awakening as there are people who have had them. But certainly each genuine one has something in common with all the others. . . .”

When a man or woman has a spiritual awakening, the most important meaning of it is that he has now become able to do, feel, and believe that which he could not do before on his unaided strength and resources alone. He has been granted a gift which amounts to a new state of consciousness and being. He has been set on a path which tells him he is really going somewhere, that life is not a dead end, not something to be endured or mastered. In a very real sense he has been transformed, because he has laid hold of a source of strength which, in one way or another, he had hitherto denied himself.”

AA – A Newsletter for Professionals, Fall 2003



Visit us online ... <http://www.aafairviewriverside.org/>

Join us for a
Speaker Meeting

Brennan Center
East Building
Sunday @ 7:15pm

AA
Sunday
Night



The General Meeting on
Sunday nights @ 7:15pm
If interested in helping out,
please contact us at
feedback@aafairviewriverside.org

12-step Opportunities



Fairview Riverside AA – U of M Medical Center

To keep the program, we must give it away!

General Meeting – Sunday speakers –
7:15pm – Brennan Center – East Building

AA Wing Meeting – Saturdays – 6:30pm –
5th Floor Treatment Center – Cafeteria

Fairview Riverside – U of M Detox Center – Sundays – 8:30pm

Annual Gopher State Round Up – AA Hospitality Suite 115—Memorial Day
Weekend - May 2019

For more information, please email
Fairview Riverside Board of Trustees
at

feedback@aafairviewriverside.org

Visit us online

<http://www.aafairviewriverside.org/>

Have you
written
something?

Would you
like to have
it published in
Straight Talk?



Leave your written/graphic contribution in Squad
70's mail slot located in Room 537—5th Floor
West Building - Address to *Straight Talk*

Additional Meetings at U of M Medical Center

DAY	GROUP	TIME	LOCATION
	ACA	8:00pm	North Bldg—NG22
Monday	10		
	ACOA	9:00pm	North Bldg—NG22
Tuesday	4		
	CA	8:30pm	West Bldg—Floor 5 #541
Wednesday			
	GA	7:00pm	East Bldg-MB114
Sunday			
	NA	8:00pm	East Bldg—Brennan Cen.
Friday			
	OA	4:45pm	East Bldg-MB114
Monday			
	WA	11:30am	East Bldg-Dining Rm E
Wednesday			
	Opiates Anonymous	8:00pm	West Bldg—Floor 5 #557
Thursday			
	(Workaholics Anonymous)		
	(Closed Meeting—Alumni)		

7th Tradition

Every AA Group Ought To Be Fully Self-Supporting

Your contributions support:

- AA Meeting Rooms' monthly rent stipend
- *Straight Talk* Newsletter
- Gopher State Hospitality Suite
- General Meeting & 12 step supplies/medallions
- GSO & AA service organizations
- AA at Fairview Riverside website

That's why
we pass the
envelop!



Drop Box
located in the
West Building
Room F537

U of M Medical Center Fairview Meeting Listings

AA (Alcoholics Anonymous)

Day	Group/Squad	Time	Location
Monday	3	5:30pm	East Bldg - MB114 (Dining Room F)
	43	7pm	North Bldg/Ground Level NG48
Tuesday	57/36	1pm	West Bldg - Fifth Floor F571
	62	7pm	Bethany Lutheran Church—Franklin Avenue @ 25th Avenue
Wednesday	20	7pm	East Bldg - F119 (Dining Room F)
Friday	70	8:30pm	North Bldg/Ground Level-NG42
Saturday	1	8pm	East Bldg/Brennan Center
Sunday	47	5:30pm	East Bldg—MB114 (Dining Room F)
	General Meeting	7:15pm	East Bldg/Brennan Center
	2	8:30pm	East Bldg /Brennan Center

Trustees 2nd Sunday each month 6:15pm East Bldg/Brennan Center lobby

Visit our new Facebook page—**StraightTalk Society**
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/371595779928822/>

On another note... Please elect a new trustee for your AA squad/group and have them attend the next trustees meeting. The trustees meet on the second Sunday of the month in the Brennan Center lobby in the East Building at 6:15pm.

Monthly Treasurer's & Secretary's Reports on
website

Visit us online

<http://www.aafairviewriverside.org/>



Trustees

Bruce M. – Sq. 62
Lynn – Sq. 1
AJ W.- General Meeting
Jim M. – Sq. 70
Kyle W.
Grant - Sq. 2
Jim W.- Sq. 3
Karl K. - Sq. 57

Looking for Reps from:
Sq. 20 Sq. 43 Sq. 47

Please send a representative from your Squad!

People who don't go to meetings aren't there to see what happens to people who don't go to meetings.

- Is your group not listed? Is it listed incorrectly?

Please leave a note with any changes or your writing submission in:

AA group #70 mailbox—located in the West Building — Room F537