

Daily Readings and Inspirations May 9

View today's readings from AA's "Daily Reflections", Hazelden's "Twenty-Four Hours A Day", NA's "Just For Today", Hazelden's "Walk In Dry Places", Hazelden's "Keep It Simple", "Each Day a New Beginning" daily meditations for women, Melody Beattie's "Journey to the Heart" and "More Language of Letting Go", Hazelden's "One More Day", Hazelden's "A Day At A Time", "Father Leo's Daily Meditation", AA's "As Bill Sees It" and more.

May 9

Daily Reflections

WALKING THROUGH FEAR

If we still cling to something we will not let go, we ask God to help us be willing.

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, p. 76

When I had taken my Fifth Step, I became aware that all my defects of character stemmed from my need to feel secure and loved. To use my will alone to work on them would have been trying obsessively to solve the problem. In the Sixth Step I intensified the action I had taken in the first three Steps -- meditating on the Step by saying it over and over, going to meetings, following my sponsor's suggestions, reading and searching within myself. During the first three years of sobriety I had a fear of entering an elevator alone. One day I decided I must walk through this fear. I asked for God's help, entered the elevator, and there in the corner was a lady crying. She said that since her husband had died she was deathly afraid of elevators. I forgot my fear and comforted her. This spiritual experience helped me to see how willingness was the key to working the rest of the Twelve Steps to recovery. God helps those who help themselves.

Twenty-Four Hours A Day

A.A. Thought For The Day

We alcoholics used so little self-control when we were drinking, we were so absolutely selfish, that it does us good to give up something once in a while. Using self-discipline and denying ourselves a few things is good for us. At first, giving up liquor is a big enough job for all of us, even with God's help. But later on, we can practice self-discipline in other ways to keep a firm grip on our minds so that we don't start any wishful thinking. If we daydream too much, we'll be in danger of slipping. Am I practicing enough self-discipline?

Meditation For The Day

In material things, you must rely on your own wisdom and that of others. In spiritual things, you cannot rely so much on your own wisdom as on God's guidance. In dealing with personalities, it is a mistake to step out too much on your own. You must try to be guided by God in all human relationships. You cannot accomplish much of value in dealing with people until God knows you are ready. You alone do not have the power or wisdom to put things right between people.

You must rely on God to help you in these vital matters.

Prayer For The Day

I pray that I may rely on God in dealing with people's problems. I pray that I may try to follow His guidance in all personal relationships.

As Bill Sees It

The Way Of Strength, p. 129

We need not apologize to anyone for depending upon the Creator.

We have good reason to disbelieve those who think spirituality is the way of weakness. For us, it is the way of strength.

The verdict of the ages is that men of faith seldom lack courage.

They trust their God. So we never apologize for our belief in Him.

Instead, we try to let Him demonstrate, through us, what He can do.

Walk In Dry Places

The Importance of Hope

Maintaining Optimism.

As a great virtue, hope is ranked with faith and love. But those of us caught in the thicket of alcoholism and other addictions had much experience with hopes that turned out to be merely cruel illusions. In recovery, however, hope has a sound purpose. It is really a form of optimism, an underlying belief that things will work out in spite of the obstacles and problems we face. This helps provide the strength and energy we need to succeed in the face of opposition and setbacks.

We also owe much of our recovery to the capacity for hope that was in our friends and family members. Henrietta D... wife of AA member Number three, told an interviewer that she had never lost hope that her husband would eventually recover. She saw it as the answer to her hope and prayers when Bill W. and Dr. Bob arrived at her husband's bedside in Akron's City Hospital... and when he left, he never drank again.

Hope is the optimism that keeps us moving toward our highest good. Let's keep it alive.

I'll face my day with the underlying belief that things will work out in the long run. I'll refuse to be overwhelmed by temporary setbacks.

Keep It Simple

The longer I live the more beautiful life becomes.---Frank Lloyd Wright

For many of us, life was a burden while using alcohol and other drugs. As our illness went on, life was more ugly. We grew further from our friends, family, and Higher Power. In recovery, our eyes and hearts open a little more each day. We see the beauty that life holds. We now see the beauty that life holds. We now see that before recovery, we weren't living---we were dying. In recovery, we again feel happy when we hold a baby. We again may feel joy when we see a sunset. This happens mainly because we've chosen to be with people who love life, people who've been given a second chance. Once we've almost lost something important, it becomes more precious. We almost lost our lives. Now our lives are special.

Prayer for the Day: Higher Power, thank-you for a second chance. Thank-you for opening my eyes and heart. Give me the strength to keep them open.

Action for the Day: I'll list the most beautiful parts of my life. I'll open my heart today to the joy in store for me.

Each Day a New Beginning

To expect too much is to have a sentimental view of life, and this is a softness that ends in bitterness. --
Flannery O'Connor

Having too high expectations is a set-up for disappointment. Expectations that are high lend themselves to a fantasy life, and reality can never match our fantasies. When we get hooked on the fantasies, somehow thinking they are reality, or should be reality, we are vulnerable to the hurt that accompanies the emergence of "the real." Then we feel cheated--bitter: "Why did this have to happen to me?"

Having too high expectations was a familiar feeling before recovery. And it remains familiar to us, even now. Dreams and aspirations aren't wrong. In fact, they beckon us on to better and greater things. But dreams of what we can become through responsible choices are quite different from idle expectations of what will or should be.

Every moment of every day opens the way to my aspirations that enhance reality. I will be open and receptive to reality and its gifts.

NA Just For Today

Write About It!

"We sit down with a notebook, ask for guidance, pick up our pen, and start writing."

Basic Text, p. 29

When we're confused or in pain, our sponsor sometimes tells us to "write about it." Though we may groan as we drag out the notebook, we know that it will help. By laying it all out on paper, we give ourselves the chance to sort through what's bothering us. We know we can get to the bottom of our confusion and find out what's really causing our pain when we put the pen to the paper.

Writing can be rewarding, especially when working through the steps. Many members maintain a daily journal. Simply thinking about the steps, pondering their meaning, and analyzing their effect is not sufficient for most of us. There's something about the physical action of writing that helps to fix the principles of recovery in our minds and hearts.

The rewards we find through the simple action of writing are many. Clarity of thought, keys to locked places inside of us, and the voice of conscience are but a few. Writing helps us be more honest with ourselves. We sit down, quiet our thoughts, and listen to our hearts. What we hear in the stillness are the truths that we put down on paper.

Just for today: One of the ways I can search for truth in recovery is to write. I will write about my recovery today.

Today's Gift

Planning is deciding what to change today so tomorrow will be different from yesterday. --Ichak Adizes

A house is like a lump of clay that can be molded and changed. It can be fixed and shaped, torn down and added to, painted, papered, carpeted, and panelled. We can think about how to change it, find pictures in books, and order plans. We can stock up on supplies, take fix-it classes, and get advice from others. But the house will remain unchanged until we pick up a brush, grab a bucket of paint, and get to work. Only then will we see tomorrow the results of what we did today.

Our plans help us construct a vision of how we'd like the future to be, but only actions will bring these things about. With confidence in the rightness of our desires, we can be assured that God never gives us a dream we can't reach.

What action can I take today to make tomorrow's changes?

Touchstones

I learned from them that inspiration does not come like a bolt, nor is it kinetic, energetic striving, but it comes into us slowly and quietly and all the time, though we must regularly and every day give it a little chance to start flowing, prime it with a little solitude and idleness. --Brenda Ueland

We tend to be action-oriented and concerned about showing results in the shortest period of time. Our world has emphasized this outlook, especially for men. Now we are seeking spiritual progress. We are on a journey seeking a relationship with our Higher Power, with ourselves, and with others.

Spiritual progress is made by pushing aside busyness and efficiency. We become receptive to inspiration by allowing empty spaces in our lives, some solitude and idleness. This moment - right now - is one such time. It is not clearly goal-oriented. Rather it is a moment when we reflect on ourselves as recovering men. We become receptive to inspiration, to a deeper wisdom, to that part of life which we do not command.

I will remember today that spiritual progress comes only when I make room for it in my life.

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The Language Of Letting Go

Learning New Behaviors

Sometimes we'll take a few steps backward. That's okay too. Sometimes it's necessary. Sometimes it's part of going forward. --Codependent No More

Life is a Gentle Teacher. She wants to help us learn.

The lessons she wants to teach us are the ones we need to learn. Some say they are the lessons we chose to learn before we were born. Others say they are the lessons that were chosen for us.

It's frustrating to be in the midst of learning. It is like sitting in algebra class, listening to a teacher explain a subject beyond our comprehension. We do not understand, but the teacher takes the understanding for granted.

It may feel like someone is torturing us with messages that we shall never understand. We strain and strain. We become angry. Frustrated. Confused. Finally, in despair, we turn away, deciding that that formula will never be available to our mind.

Later, while taking a quiet walk, we break through. Quietly, the gift of understanding has reached that deepest place in us. We understand. We have learned. The next day in class, its hard for us to imagine not knowing. It is hard to remember the frustration and confusion of those who have not yet caught on. It seems so easy . . . now.

Life is a Gentle Teacher. She will keep repeating the lesson until we learn. It is okay to become frustrated. Confused. Angry. Sometimes it is okay to despair. Then, it is okay to walk away and allow the breakthrough to come.

It shall.

Help me remember that frustration and confusion usually precede growth. If my situation is challenging me, it is because Im learning something new, rising to a higher level of understanding. Help me be grateful, even in my frustration, that life is an exciting progression of lessons.

Today my trust in the overall and the long run is deep and is growing. When events and people do not act as I would like them to act, I reach deeper inside for my faith and let it comfort me. --Ruth Fishel

Journey To The Heart

Trust Each Step

Stay present for each step of your journey. We don't go from one place to another in a gigantic leap. We get there in increments, by going through each feeling, each belief, each experience one step at a time.

Sometimes when we pray for miracles, what we're really praying for is help in skipping steps, for shortcuts. The simple act of acceptance, of returning to each step of our path, can often bring us the miracle we need. Then we see the truth. The real miracle is one always available to each of us: it's a miracle of acceptance. We can go where we want to go, one step at a time.

Stay present for each step of your journey. Trust each stage. Many things are possible for you if you accept that the fastest way is one step at a time.

More Language Of Letting Go

Say when it's too much compassion

Sometimes, it's easy to step across that line and have too much compassion for the people in our lives. Although compassion is good, too much compassion can cripple the people we're trying to love. We understand so clearly how they feel that we don't hold them accountable for themselves. Too much compassion can hurt us, too. We can wind up feeling victimized by and resenting the people we're experiencing too much compassion toward. We're so worried about their feelings that we neglect our own.

Too much compassion means we don't believe in others enough to let them do what they need to do to help themselves. It's a way of telling them, "You can't." You can't handle your reality. You can't learn your lessons. You can't handle the truth, so I'll treat you like a helpless child.

Too much compassion can leave us prey to victimization and manipulation. We're so worried about how the other person feels that we neglect to take care of ourselves.

Here are some guidelines about compassion.

. If we're creating a problem for ourselves to solve someone else's dilemma, we've probably crossed the line.

. If we're so worried about another person's pain that we're neglecting our own emotions, we're probably over-involved.

. If guilt is the underlying motive for our behavior, maybe what we're practicing isn't compassion.

The lesson here isn't to stop caring about others. Instead we need to respect other people's right to learn their own lessons.

Too much of anything isn't a good thing. If we've crossed that line into too much compassion, we can step back into the safe zone and use a lighter touch.

God, show me if I'm harming someone in my life- a parent, child, or friend- by smothering that person with too much compassion.

A Day at a Time

Reflection For The Day

“Perfect courage,” wrote La Rochefoucauld, “means doing witnessed what we would be capable of with the world looking on.” As we grow in The Program, we recognize persistent fear for what it is, and we become able to handle it. We begin to see each adversity as a God-given opportunity to develop the kind of courage which is born of humility, rather than of bravado. Do I realize that whistling to keep up my courage is merely good practice for whistling?

Today I Pray

May I find courage in my Higher Power. Since all things are possible through Him, I must be able to overcome the insidious fears that haunt me - so often fears of losing someone or some thing that has become important in my life. I pray for my own willingness to let go of those fears.

Today I Will Remember

Praying is more than whistling in the dark.

One More Day

The dark, uneasy world of family life - where the greatest can fail and the humblest succeed.

- Randall Jarrell

We carry so much emotional baggage from childhood into our adult lives. The sum total of all our experiences forms our personalities and , in the very essence of our being, our spiritual selves. Less often do the wonderful memories, the happier times, spring forward in our minds. The bad feelings, the sad memories, the hard times - these are what we may remember the most.

Who we came from, what we came from, shouldn't define all that we can be as adults. There may come a time when regardless of our past experiences, we can acknowledge them, put them aside, and move on with our lives.

I can put aside my past by facing my future with hope and promise. I am looking for progress, not perfection.

Food For Thought

Self-Pity

"Poor little ol' me." The PLOMS. How often do we succumb to this temptation? Usually it's an excuse for not doing what we know we should do, but do not want to do. Or it's a way to manipulate someone else into doing something for us, which we should be doing ourselves. If we spend our time moaning and groaning about how unfairly life is treating us, we do not have much chance of discovering the plan which our Higher Power has for us, nor are we able to carry out His will.

Trite as it may sound, the cure for self-pity is to think about those who are less fortunate and start counting our blessings. Taking some action, doing some small thing for someone else, perhaps a phone call - these are constructive steps to take us off the "pity pot."

When we begin to feel sorry for ourselves because we must follow a food plan and may not eat spontaneously, let's remember where we came from and what things were like before we found OA.

I don't need self-pity.

One Day At A Time

OPEN MINDEDNESS

Let go of your attachment to being right, and suddenly your mind is more open.

You're able to benefit from the unique viewpoints of others, without being crippled by your own judgment.

Ralph Marston

Before joining this program much of my life was taken up with defending myself against those who would hurl abuse. I kept everything and everybody at arm's length in a bid to protect my increasingly fragile and sensitive self-assurance. As time marched on, and my disease became parasitical, the walls around me grew higher and isolation drew me inwards.

Ironically, the fortress I was building didn't protect me from myself and I soon became my own worst enemy. My self-loathing and my unceasing search for perfection led me deeper into a self-induced state of depression. Keeping everybody out and locking myself in became an exhausting exercise.

On entering the 12 Step program I soon realized that the fortress I had so carefully built to protect myself against the outside world was also preventing any kind of light, warmth and love from entering in.

As my journey of recovery progressed, brick by brick the walls came down and afforded me the nourishment I needed to blossom and grow. In learning to accept myself, I found that what others thought of me paled into insignificance. I learned that there was a wealth of experience, strength and hope which would help me along the journey. I learned that I could take what I needed and put down the remainder, without the resentment, anger, fear or pain, which previously would have sent me running for cover.

One Day at a Time . . .

I aim to be willing to keep my mind open, to accept what I need to continue my journey, and to leave the rest.

~ Sue G ~

Hour To Hour - Book - Quote

This is a 'We' program, not a 'Me' program. We do this together. Look at our steps. They all say 'We admitted' or 'We came to believe.' Doing it together makes us stronger and less likely to fool ourselves with dysfunctional ways of thinking.

Let me know that I am no longer alone and need never be alone again.

Healing Light

I am surrounding myself with healing light. I am inviting a warm, yellow/white light to surround me. I breathe it in deeply into all parts of me and I breathe out any lingering fear or darkness. Healing energy is quietly pulsing in and around me, imbuing me with a feeling of well being. I allow this energy to fill each pore of my body. This healing energy has its own intelligence and I become one with it and direct it towards those parts of me that need healing. I rest in this vibrating yellow-white light and let it fill me, surround me and make me well. Even the act of allowing this lifts me up.

I am filled with healing energy

- Tian Dayton PhD

Pocket Sponsor - Book - Quote

Few of us realize that God is all we need until God is all we have.

If I can't find God, I know who moved.

"Walk Softly and Carry a Big Book" - Book

Rather than getting even with those that hurt you, the challenge is to get even with those that help you.

Time for Joy - Book - Quote

Today I am letting a power greater than myself remove all my fear. I am now free to look within for my answers.

Alkiespeak - Book - Quote

My sponsor said; 'OK, the only way to disprove a belief system is to adopt it. You can't stand outside the experience and say it doesn't work. So, for six months, live this program, really live it. And at the end of that time if you say: 'It doesn't work, my life's still in the toilet.' Then I'll be happy to say; 'You're absolutely right, for you it doesn't work, bon voyage.' And I've tried that with a lot of guys and there's no way you can do that and say AA doesn't work - Because it does. - John L.

AA Thought for the Day

Surrender

On the face of it, surrendering certainly doesn't sound like winning.

But it is in AA. . .

We must, and we do, surrender to win.

- Experience, Strength and Hope, pp. 155-156

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

POETRY

"Poetry is the rhythmical creation of beauty in words."

--Edgar Allan Poe

Language helps us to understand and communicate. Poetry adds the dimension of "shape" and "movement". Poetry seems to go beyond words and ideas to the very essence of what life is about; it hints at divinity!

When I was drinking, I never understood the art of poetry. Today I use poetry as part of my adventure into meaning and self-knowledge.

So much more is open to me in sobriety, and I am able to appreciate things I never used to comprehend. Poetry is part of "it gets better".

Help me to seek You through all aspects of art.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Galatians 5:22-23

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.

Galatians 6:7

Daily Inspiration

You can become more peaceful and a more interesting person by having a healthy attitude and accepting your responsibilities. Lord, help me to remember that life is what we make of it.

Take less for granted and you will become very busy enjoying all that you have. Lord, thank you for my blessings and for all those that I am able to share them with.

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