

Staying with Sobriety



LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY BEHAVIORAL MEDICINE CENTER

Summer 2006

Managing Your Anger

Everyone gets angry and most of us accept that easily. Anger in and of itself is not a problem, however, the way we express anger (or don't express it) can cause many problems. Anger becomes a problem when it does any of the following: comes too quickly or too often, lasts too long, invades every part of your life, gets you into legal problems, interferes with/damages relationships or jobs, causes or increases physical pain.

There are four main ways to deal with anger:

1. Stuffing it
2. Exploding
3. Plotting to get even
4. Managing the anger

Those who stuff their anger generally do this to avoid a direct confrontation. This is done for a variety of reasons such as fear of hurting someone or being rejected, fear of losing control, or it may be a behavior learned during formative years. Whatever the reason, the consequences are usually similar. The person stuffing the anger compromises their physical and mental health - frequently causing headaches, stomachaches, and high stress levels. Relationships suffer due to the lack of honesty about what is really going on.

People who tend to explode with their anger tend to blame and shame those close to them. This can lead to abusive situations. Once again, this may be a result

of various reasons such as demonstrating an image of power, avoiding expressing underlying emotions, or lack of communication skills. Explosive anger generally pushes people away, thus damaging relationships. It can also lead to legal problems when situations become abusive and/or violent.

The passive-aggressive way of handling anger revolves around the "don't get mad, get even" philosophy. Plotting revenge, manipulating others through actions such as the "silent treatment" or gossip are all dishonest ways of expressing anger. Due to the dishonesty, trust is generally lost in relationships.

Managing anger in an assertive way is the healthiest way to express the anger that we all experience from time to time. This involves an open, honest, and direct expression of feelings regarding the situation. In recovery, it becomes obvious that this is the best option for expressing anger, however, the difficult part is following through consistently.

The "pay-offs" can be great in learning to better manage your anger in recovery. Relationships tend to improve, stress levels decrease, and physical and mental health improves. And best and most important of all, there is one less trigger for relapse.

Elaine Coyazo
Adjunctive Therapist

To help work towards "managing" anger remember the following tips:

DO

1. Take a "time out" if needed to gather your thoughts
2. Acknowledge the other person's feelings
3. Listen actively - paraphrase what the other is saying to you
4. Take your time - remember to breathe - walk away if needed
5. Be aware of your tone of voice and your body language
6. Use "I" statements to express your feelings
7. Remember that your anger may not change the situation
8. Be specific
9. Be mature enough to admit when you are wrong
10. Make your own list of "fair fighting rules"

DON'T

1. Bring up the past
2. Try to resolve anything when you're hungry or tired
3. Interrupt the other person
4. Put the other person - or yourself down
5. Pace, act bored, or rushed for time
6. Answer the phone or otherwise become distracted
7. Be sarcastic
8. Invade the other's personal space

For more information call 909-558-9224.

The Source

The following sources will assist with any questions or concerns regarding sobriety.

Publication:

Title: Seeds of Grace: A Nun's Reflection of the Spirituality of Alcoholics Anonymous

Written by: Sister Molly Monohan

Review by: Erwin S.

Seeds of Grace is an eloquent, moving testimony to the healing power of the truth. Though a variety of elements including grace, enlightenment, forgiveness, gratitude, community prayer, and spiritual awakening, Sister Molly Monohan shares her insights on why AA works and how it brings peace, freedom, and service to others.

Web Sites:

LLUBMC
www.llubmc.com

Recovering
Alumni Association
www.bmcraa.org

Alcoholics Anonymous
www.alcoholics-anonymous.org

Narcotics Anonymous
www.na.org

Southern California
Narcotics Anonymous
www.todayna.org

AA Newsletter
www.aagrapevine.org

Recovery source for
upcoming events
www.anonymousone.com

Inspiration

Prayer does not change God, but it changes him who prays. ~Søren Kierkegaard

In my role as chaplain at Loma Linda Behavioral Medicine Center I minister to a wide range of people, from young children to seniors, from those struggling with eating disorders to chemical dependency. One of my favorite groups in the hospital is the spiritual group I share with the children. Bill Cosby was right; kids do say the darndest things! One day we were reading a story in which the main character prayed, and I asked them, "What is prayer?" They thought for a few moments and a young girl raised her hand. "Prayer is talking with God," she said confidently. What a great answer. We paused for a moment, and then I followed up with another question, "How does it work?" I could tell by their faces this really perplexed them. And then the same girl raised her hand again and simply replied, "**I don't know, it just does.**" Wow, despite the tragic life experiences these kids have had so early in their development, I am amazed at their depth of faith and spiritual understanding.

We as adults can learn so much from children. There has been a lot of interest given to the area of religion and spirituality lately. The national media has turned its attention to the efficacy of prayer. There are several studies for and against the power of prayer. How are we to determine which study to believe? Is prayer quantifiable? Can we really put God to such a test? What do these studies really prove? And how does one integrate a study into one's own experience of prayer and its benefits? One positive outcome of the release of these studies has been our focus being drawn to how and why we communicate with our higher power. So let's consider together: What is prayer? How does it work?

In the field of addiction recovery, we believe that the 12-step journey is a spiritual journey. Step 11 states:

Sought through prayer and meditation to

improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood God, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out.

In the Big Book of A.A. we read,

Step 11 suggests prayer and meditation.

We shouldn't be shy in this matter of prayer. Better men than we are using it constantly. It works, if we have the proper attitude and work at it. (85-86)

The *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* also speaks of prayer:

Those of us who have come to make regular use of prayer would no more do without it than we would refuse air, food or sunshine. And for the same reason, when we refuse air, light or food the body suffers. And when we turn away from meditation and prayer, we likewise deprive our minds, our emotions and our intuitions of vitally needed support.

As the body can fail its purpose for lack of nourishment, so can the soul. We all need the light of God's reality, the nourishment of His strength, and the atmosphere of His grace. To an amazing extent the facts of A.A. life confirm this ageless truth. (97-98)

What has been your experience of prayer and meditation, and how have those spiritual disciplines affected your life? I like to think of prayer as talking to God, and meditation as listening. But for me, many aspects of prayer and meditation are confusing. Often I pray for patients throughout the hospital, not completely understanding what exactly is taking place. With the study previously discussed, it seems a natural and human response to pray for loved ones undergoing heart surgery, just as we pray when

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Partnering Together

Loma Linda University Behavioral Medicine Center transforms lives through serving your community with a variety of programs and services. There are many opportunities to partner with the BMC so that you, too, can help make a difference. If you would like to learn more about supporting these programs or how to become more involved, please contact Pauline Deeb at 909-558-3555 or pdeeb@ahs.llumc.edu

Office of Philanthropy
PO Box 2000, MVP
Loma Linda, CA 92354

At a Glance

July

22nd Annual South Bay Roundup
Friday - Tuesday, June 30 - July 4
Torrance Marriott

Looking for a fun way to spend the long holiday weekend? This is a great opportunity for AA/Al-Anon/Alateen participation. Festivities include a marathon, speaker, long-timers, banquet, golf tournament, and much more! For further information, please call 310-354-7660.

August

29th MAAD Dog Daze Convention
Tuesday - Thursday, August 1-3
Palm Desert, CA

With nearly 30 years of experience, this convention promises to exceed your expectations! Events include a speaker meeting, young people meetings, banquet, and a dance. For more information, please visit www.aainthedesert.org.

September

Joe & Charlie
Saturday - Sunday, September 9-10
Indio, CA

Pre-registration \$18; after September 1 \$22
The Big Book comes alive! If you missed them before, don't miss them now. Registration is limited to the first 400, so book in advance! For more information, please call 310-465-1726.



Thank You Readers!

We thank you for the feedback regarding our newsletter in the survey distributed in the last issue. Your comments will shape our future publications. Many of you requested articles related to spirituality, relapse, nutrition, and other general health topics about addiction and sobriety. Please look for these in upcoming issues! Also, many requested to have articles and poems from former patients regarding their experiences with addiction and alcoholism. We encourage you to submit your articles to:

LLUBMC
Cheri McGrath
1710 Barton Road
Redlands, CA 92373



RAA – Celebrating 15th Year Anniversary and Never Slowing Down!

The members of our Recovering Alumni Association (RAA) never miss a beat! On April 22, approximately 45 members, their families, and friends headed to our local Fiesta Village for the golf, amusement rides, and most importantly, fellowship. Event goers commented that the park was filled with laughter and joy from the friendly and familiar faces. We hope you were able to join RAA for the other recent events including the men's and women's mountain retreat, board member nominations, and the installation dinner on June 11. Please look for highlights of these events in our next newsletter. Other great upcoming family activities include the Lake Perris campout on June 23-25,

a 66'ers baseball game at the San Bernardino Stadium on July 28, a golf tournament in September, and gratitude dinner in November. For more information on all RAA events, please call Darlene at 909-792-9005.



Inspiration

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experiencing our own trials in life. But what of those prayers that are not answered as we ask?

I believe that just as good communication leads to a healthy marriage, communication with our higher power is critically important to forming, nurturing, and maintaining a healthy relationship with God. It does not involve bending God's will to match our own, but the opposite, seeking for the knowledge of God's will for us. Mahatma Gandhi said, "Prayer is not asking. It is a longing of the soul. It is daily admission of one's weakness. It is better in prayer to have a heart without words than words without a heart." And so again, what seems important is how prayer affects our hearts, minds, and soul. When we pray, it is not God who changes, but ourselves. What is prayer? It is talking with God. How does it work? I don't know, it just does.

Sean Hibbs
Chaplain



Staying with Sobriety

Chemical Dependency Services
1710 Barton Road
Redlands, California 92373



**LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY
BEHAVIORAL MEDICINE CENTER**

Please write to the address below if you wish to have your name removed from the list to receive announcements or notices introducing new services, health educational programs and events, or products of Loma Linda University Behavioral Medicine Center. All reasonable efforts will be taken to ensure that your request is honored.

Promotional Services
c/o Access Center
245 East Redlands Blvd. Suite A
San Bernardino, CA 92408

LLUMCMTC#BMC-049-0606063100

For more information call 909-558-9224.