



CONNECTIONS

Volume 76

Official Newsletter of the Greater Saint Louis District of Cocaine Anonymous

November, 2016

The Power of Prayer

During my active addiction, I didn't understand the meaning behind prayer. My concept of God was based on what I understood about myself. I was a scorecard-holding, grudge-nursing, unforgiving shell of a person who was gifted with the ability to know the intentions of others and magnify them into something much more sinister than what truly was reality. This kind of thinking was not conducive to understanding God; I had made Him in my own warped image, not the other way around. So praying to such a Higher Power as this was not attractive to me when I first crawled into the rooms of recovery. I was encouraged to define a God of my own understanding, a concept that never had occurred to me before, as I'm sure many others can relate. This made it much easier to pray, even though my flimsy faith tried to assure me He would never listen.

My sponsor told me I had to ask God every morning for His help and then thank Him at the end of every night. I did the bare minimum and was wary of lightning bolts each time I bowed my head to pray. Somehow, the longer I stayed sober, the less apprehensive I felt. I still didn't have warm, fuzzy feelings toward God, but I could see how praying was helping me to stay focused. The more clean time I had, the more I started to wake up to just how much I had screwed up my life. Self-pity waged war against gratitude and I noticed that the more often I prayed, the more I started to feel hope. In spite of the wreckage of my life, I realized God was not punishing me for being an addict. He was gently showing me that without Him, my life would always be unmanageable. With Him, I saw how He took the shattered fragments of my life and turned it into something glorious and magnificent.

A simple prayer, offered up by a wretched addict with only a scrap of faith, miraculously led me on a path of sobriety and healing. In spite of my poor health, strained family relations, legal problems, and other factors from my days of using, I was developing a bond with my Father (as I understood Him) that infused me with courage to face life on life's terms. As I was being treated for Hepatitis C in my first year, many times I was so physically sick, all I could do was pray. He knew that was what I needed more than anything and today I am grateful for having Hep C. Without this deadly disease, I believe I would have been more concerned with fixing other broken relationships that I was not qualified to fix. With me being out of the way, I was able to focus on getting to know God and myself while He healed my relationship with my children and other family members I had hurt. In "A Quiet Peace," it says, "Of all the relationships that I am learning to rebuild in my recovery, two remain perpetually in the spotlight: my relationships with myself and with my Higher Power. These two comprise the foundation of every other relationship in my life. An intimate, loving relationship with myself automatically brings me closer to my God. Conversely, my relationship with my God will lead me into a loving, close, spiritually intimate relationship with myself." When we are purposefully building these two crucial relationships, we do not need to worry about how we can ever rebuild our broken relations with others. One reason is because others will see how earnest we are about living the principles we are learning in recovery. Another reason is that we will be led by God's wisdom in knowing how and when to make amends.

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Step Eleven teaches us the importance of improving and deepening our relationship with God through conscious contact. I have come to understand this as sincere prayer and quiet meditation. While being honest about my feelings with another human being may result in that person becoming angry or upset, I can be completely honest with God and not worry that He will abandon me. There have even been times I was angry with Him, even when the logical part of my brain knew I should only be grateful for all He has done for me. I vividly remember such a time when I knelt and offered up a candy-coated prayer. I felt a whisper in my heart telling me to cut it and shut it and say what I really felt. I did, and afterward I felt calm in my stormy spirit and through peaceful meditation, was able to hear His answer.

In "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions," it says, "All of us, without exception, pass through times when we can pray only with the greatest exertion of will. Occasionally, we go even further than this. We are seized with a rebellion so sickening that we simply won't pray. When these things happen, we should not think too ill of ourselves. We should simply resume prayer as soon as we can, doing what we know to be good for us." I remember reading this during my Pink Cloud Phase and thinking such a thing would never happen to me. God and I were tight, like peas and carrots, and the idea that anyone would feel this way was inconceivable! Then came Year Two, and while following the course I knew God was leading me, things didn't happen as neatly as I thought they should. Nor were they happening in my timetable. I prayed in this exact manner and was frustrated with myself and God. Coincidentally, it was around Thanksgiving when I was at a 12 and 12 meeting and I actually had to read this paragraph. Out loud. I was convicted by my pride as I read the part about "all of us, without exception," and felt God's permission to forgive myself as I read the last part about "not think(ing) too ill of ourselves." My gratitude took on a whole new dimension that year. The more I strive to improve my conscious contact with God through prayer and meditation, the more I feel His presence in every aspect of my life. There is no relationship like this one. While it is beautiful to have healthy relations with other people, it is my intimacy with God that makes this possible. When I hung out with my drinking buddies, we shared all the lovely characteristics that are inherent to addiction, and I naturally was a liar, cheat, thief, and a whore. (No, that story in Hope, Faith, and Courage is not mine. Well, I didn't write it, anyway!) As much as I lied, cheated, and stole from others, I still demanded honesty and loyalty from others. I couldn't figure out why I kept finding myself a victim in all my relationships! The more I am active in my relationship with God, the more I take on His characteristics. I am seeing how I was created in His image and understanding the depth of His love for me. The power of prayer does not depend so much upon the one who prays as it does upon the One who hears. It is truly the greatest adventure in this life.

Laura N.

Staying Connected

Our local Saint Louis Cocaine Anonymous Hotline (314/361-3500) is answered 24 hours a day by volunteer members of our Fellowship. It's a Fabulous resource for anyone feeling squirrely—pick up the phone—NOT THE DRUG!!!

Staying Connected

The Missouri Area website (www.camissouri.org) has lots of helpful information, including a link to the C.A. World Services pages. Here, you can not only learn many things about C.A. and their upcoming events, but you can also be directed to one of our on-line meetings, accessible anytime, anywhere you have a computer.

DISTRICT DONATIONS				
<i>Meeting Name</i>	<i>July 2016</i>	<i>August 2016</i>	<i>September 2016</i>	<i>October 2016</i>
Come & Get It	9.00	40.00	12.00	25.00
End Of The Line				
Fried Pipers & Cocanuts	15.00	10.00	20.00	25.00
It's Not About Coke				
Men's Meeting	80.00			
Serenity On Saturday	3.00	5.00	10.00	20.00
The Thursday Night Meeting				

H & I DONATIONS				
<i>Meeting Name</i>	<i>July 2016</i>	<i>August 2016</i>	<i>September 2016</i>	<i>October 2016</i>
Fried Pipers & Cocanuts	17.00	26.51	20.00	13.75
Serenity On Saturday	5.00	15.00	11.10	6.01
The Thursday Night Meeting			5.00	

Detailed financial information is available at our monthly business meetings. All C.A. members are welcome and urged to attend if possible.

The Greater Saint Louis District Central Service meeting is held the second Sunday of each month at 4:00 PM at the 212 Club, 204 West Pitman, O'Fallon, Missouri 63366. If the second Sunday falls on a holiday weekend, this meeting is held the first or third Sunday. Confirmed meeting dates are always available on our website www.camissouri.org. Directions—Take I-70 west to Exit 217 Highway K. Go Right on Main Street off the exit ramp. Go .3 mile to left on Pitman. Facility is on the left around back.

The Hospitals & Institutions Committee takes meetings into facilities where addicts cannot get out to attend a meeting on their own. H & I volunteers are constantly needed and should express interest by attending a District Central Service meeting or contacting the District Chair, at Vicky M. at (314) 846-2346.

You will be seeing order forms for TJ'S Pizza floating around. This is a new fund raiser for the district so order as many as you can. They make great gifts but do not hold up very well in as a stocking stuffer.

The price of literature will be going up 1/1/2017. This increase is to bring literature sales to just above the breakeven point. We have been selling it at a loss. So you have from now until 01/01/2017 to get literature at the current price.

Connections is a quarterly publication published by the Greater Saint Louis District of Cocaine Anonymous. It is intended solely to provide information for the fellowship of Cocaine Anonymous. We hope to communicate the experience, strength, and hope of C.A. members, reflecting recovery, unity, and service, within the bounds of friendliness and good taste. This Newsletter presents experiences and opinions of Cocaine Anonymous members. Those opinions expressed herein are of the individual contributors and are not to be attributed nor taken as an endorsement by Cocaine Anonymous, Cocaine Anonymous World Service Office, Inc., Greater Saint Louis District of Cocaine Anonymous, or Connections. The editors reserve the right to edit any submissions in adherence to the Twelve Traditions of Cocaine Anonymous. If you would like to know more about Cocaine Anonymous, the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions, please write and ask about C.A. World Service Conference approved literature at CAWSO, 21720 South Wilmington Avenue., Suite 304, Long Beach, CA 90810; e-mail to info@CA.org or fax to (310) 559-2554. Contact C.A. by phone at (310) 559-5833. Also note that the C.A. World Service Office web page is www.ca.org. This publication and all its contents are copyrighted by the Greater Saint Louis District of Cocaine Anonymous. Any unauthorized duplication or publication is prohibited. In the spirit of Tradition Six, "C.A. is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution."



Happy Birthday

Congratulations to each of our members who celebrated a sobriety milestone this issue. Birthdays are generally reported via your group GSR, so if you don't see your meeting/birthday listed please check with your GSR. Or, you can contact the Editor directly. Birthdays printed are those that have already been celebrated since the last newsletter printing at the time this edition went to press.

Fried Pipers & Cocanuts

Wednesday 7 PM
First Unity Church

Missy A.	30 Days
Frankie S.	18 Months
Jim S.	2 Years
Tom P.	5 Years
Tracy W.	10 Years
Jim L.	11 Years
Joe B.	11 Years
Michael M.	26 Years
Susan C.	35 Years

It's Not About Coke

Tuesday 7:00 PM
West County Club

Susan D.	6 Months
Maureen H.	1 Year

Serenity On Saturday (S.O.S)

Saturday 1:00 PM
Harris House

Susie M.	30 Days
Allie U.	60 Days
Angie R.	60 Days
Julian B.	60 Days
Katie M.	90 Days
Janae S.	90 Days
Carol Anne D.	1 Year
Kim T.	9 Years
Margo G	23 Years
Leslie A	25 Years
Mary J.	27 Years

Come and Get It

Sunday 6:00 PM
212 Club

Heather W.	30 Days
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Holiday Party!! Pot Luck!!

December 11th 2016

We will be having the District CA Holiday Open House and Bingo at the 212 Club in O'fallon Mo. The District will provide the meat. The festivities will start at 1:30 pm. This is a family friendly event and fund raiser. This is really a great chance to fellowship. I hope to see you there.