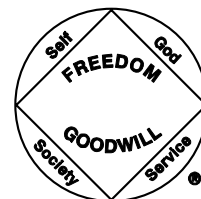




THE Group Conscience



DCANA Newsletter

September 2004

My Favorite Spiritual Principle by: Ceci S.



It took me quite a bit of time to come up with an answer to this topic. I always say, when in doubt refer to the dictionary. Here are the definitions I found to be relevant to the term of Spiritual Principle:

- 1) Definition of Spiritual: of, relating to, consisting of, or affecting the animating or vital principle held to give life to physical organisms (layman's terms – something that gives life, or affects the will to live)
- 2) Definition of Principle: a comprehensive and fundamental law, doctrine, or assumption.

So, putting these two together, I've come up with Spiritual

Principle as being a fundamental law that gives me the will to live. In this context – I would have to say my favorite spiritual principle is **HOPE**. When I first came to the rooms of NA, I was emotionally destroyed. I was faithless, and very angry with my God. At my very first meeting I heard the readings at the beginning of the meeting. They brought tears to my eyes. I knew I was home. I heard the members sharing what was going on in their recovery, and what had happened to them during their using. Occasionally they were sharing the physical or material things, the actual acts that they had committed. But for the most part, they were sharing the thoughts in their heads. (*spiritual principle cont. pg4*)

Home Groups... You Got One? by: Kenny S.

Why yes, as a matter of fact I do! It was the 4th most important suggestion that I followed when I came into the rooms; right after "don't use", "keep commin' back" and "get a sponsor". Obviously at the time, like everything else, I had no idea what this meant or the impact that it would have on my recovery.

In a nutshell, a Home Group is an NA group that you make a commitment to participate, support and attend regularly. Of course this is all voluntary and after which you become a Home Group Member. In addition to having a place (home) to go to regularly where other Home group members expect and usually look forward to seeing you, the group benefits by having other core members that will help ensure the stability of the group. Amongst other things, Home group members foster a sense of responsibility to the group and camaraderie towards the members; principles that we have never had or long lost through active addiction.

Before I got here a few years ago, I had no direction, no guidance, no goals, no hope, no love and no place that I could call home! Through my Home group, I am able to enjoy all that I had been missing. For me, it's hard to remember exactly when, but I believe that it was my very first or second meeting when someone announced at the meeting's end that I should get a Home group. I couldn't understand it at the time but I had this wonderful feeling of what appeared to be concern and love from people who didn't even know me! I had yearned so long and hard for someone, anyone, to smile at me, to hold me, to tell me that they loved me and most importantly to tell me to keep commin' back! I joined immediately...in fact, I made several groups my home groups over the course of the next few weeks! until later that someone pointed out that I should keep only one, just like a home. Okay, okay I'm a little slow but I finally got the message then! I kept my membership in the Beginners group and today am still a member of this group. Why, because it was crucial for me to have somewhere to hear a "message" that I could understand while early in my recovery process. (*Home Group cont. pg. 2*)

*** Anniversaries ***

August: 31st Mike N. 19 yrs
September: 1st Harwood 7 yrs, 2nd Mark W (Kip) 6 yrs, 4th Dennis G. & Sarah Q. 3 yrs, 10th Kathy M. 9 yrs, 14th Mike M. 14 yrs, 22nd Tiffany B. 1 yr., 28th Holly P. 13 yrs
October: N/A
November: 29th Joanna J. 6 yrs

To me, the voice a NA is like a choir of thousands of voices singing the same song. It reflects and celebrates our diversity while focusing us all on our primary purpose: carrying the message to the addict who still suffers. (Anonymous-NA WAY)

Views from the Shoulders of Giants!

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It is curious that physical change should be so common in the world and moral courage so rare.

\*Mark Twain

To fly we have to have resistance.

\*Maya Lin

It's a rash man who reaches a conclusion before he gets to it.

\*Jacob Levin

Whatever you want to do, do it now. There are only so many tomorrows.

\*Michael Landon

None of us is as smart as all of us.

\*Phil Condit

The highest reward for a man's toil is not what he gets for it, but what he becomes by it.

\*John Ruskin

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* * Word Scramblers * *

See if you can unscramble the recovery based words.
Good Luck!!!

1. HENGAC.....
2. GNETIMES.....
3. TINYU.....
4. DEOMREF.....
5. AVI SETORERSN.....
6. MONEREWC.....
7. GOERUCA.....

18 Most Self-Defeating Behaviors (part 3/3)

13. Refusing to "play games": Politics, schmoozing, and small talk are all necessary in order to succeed.
14. Being envious of others: Teamwork is ruined when team members envy each other to the extent that they root against each other.
15. Quitting too soon: You have more control over trying or quitting than over success or failure. If you always quit, you will never succeed. If you always try, you may eventually succeed.
16. Letting fear run your life: You were bad at maintaining healthy relationships. Relationships however are necessary for all aspects of your life. If you let fear run your life, you will never make a commitment to anyone, including yourself.
17. Not moving on after a loss: When you spend more time NOT cutting your losses, than you do moving ahead, you can't move ahead.
18. Not asking for what you need: What's important to you is not necessarily important to others. If you don't ask for what you need – whether it is something to help you become more serene or accepting, you are leaving it to other people's imaginations. If you think your well being is a high priority to them, you have a good imagination.

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[Step 11] We've begun to see that God's will for us is the ability to live with dignity, to love ourselves and others, to laugh, and to find great joy and beauty in our surroundings. Our most heartfelt longings and dreams for our lives are coming true. These priceless gifts are no longer beyond our reach. They are, in fact, the very essence of God's will for us. (*It Works H&W*, pg 112)



(Home Group cont.) I think that I would have gotten "lost in the sauce" had I started somewhere else. At the time, the meeting topics in other groups seemed very difficult to understand and the members seemed like Spiritual Giants because they appeared to know everything! Today in my Home group, it's a joy to keep it simple by focusing on the newcomer (the most important person at the meeting) and offering them love, guidance, sponsorship, information and whatever they need to make them feel...well...at home; just like my predecessors did for me. It's amazing that I can do these things today. Not only can I apply spiritual principles like love, accountability, responsibility, honesty, integrity, and many, many others while I'm sitting in a meeting; the miracle is that I have learned and continued to learn to practice these principles in my life whether I am at work, home or play. This has truly been a benefit that I couldn't have ever imagined. I can not express the gratitude that I have for those who were there for me in the beginning and even though most of them have gone off to other places and taken on other meetings, etc...I believe that it is God's Will for me to stay and give back what was exceedingly available to me. It gives me great joy to watch over a period of time, that scared, timid, winy, shy, loud, obnoxious and hopeless newcomer embrace this new way of life. Each week that passes, I get the opportunity to experience this miracle of recovery. For more info see IP#2, The Group Booklet, Basic Text CH. 5 (What Can I Do?) or simply **join a Home Group.**

Some announcements from 'round the way in the Chesapeake & Potomac Region

Sept.	Event	Location	Host	Contact
12 th	Central Maryland Crab Feast \$20 crabs/\$5 burgers 12-4pm; H&I Learning Meeting @ 5pm	Laurel Lakes Gude Pav. 8300 Mulberry St. Laurel, MD	Central MD	
17 th - 19 th	Moonlight Madness Campout! \$10 weekend (\$5 kids)/\$5 sat. only	Pohick Bay Regional Park Lorton, VA	Rock Creek Area	
18 th	Boat Ride: Spirit of Washington Details to come or check with East of the River Area for info.			
19 th	Battlefield Funday Food, Contests, Talent Show Starts noonish, speaker @ 6	Costello Park Manassas, VA		
25 th	H&I Learning Day 2-6pm FREE Event	St. Albans Church 3001 Wisconsin Ave Washington, DC	C&P Regional H&I	
Oct.	Event	Location	Host	Contact
1-3 rd	Unity Weekend!!!	Christopher Run Campground		Gayle M.: (703) 404-4359
17 th	Sunset Dinner Dance 4:30-7:30pm \$10/person	Cherry Hill Manor 9450 Cherry Hill Road College Park, MD	Regional Special Events	
23 rd	Mini Convention and Comedy Show 2pm-12:45am	Bethany Lutheran Church 5501 Silver Hill Road District Heights, MD	South Potomac Area	
30 th	Masquerade Ball Details to come or check with East of the River Area for info.			

The Dulles Corridor Area Picnic
 {{{{{{{{{ was a Success!!! }}}}}}}}}
 Thank you to the Special Events
 committee for their work and
 vigilance in putting this event on.

Acceptance by: Mike A.

Our very first problem/solution is to accept our present circumstances, **as they are, ourselves as we are, and the people about us as they are.** This is to adopt a realistic humility without which no genuine advance can even begin. Again and again, we shall need to return to that flattering point of departure. This is an exercise in acceptance that we can profitably practice every day of our lives.

Thought to Ponder...

My serenity is directly proportional to my level of acceptance.

All my life I have struggled with my own perception of self-worth. I tend to fall into the trap that I am somehow less than I should be, or what others expect of me. These feelings of inadequacy have a way of twisting into something far more treacherous for me. Because I feel like I am less than you, I spend a lot of time trying to prove to myself that I am better than you. This ugliness manifests itself into arrogant, judgmental, egotistical behavior. I become closed-minded, self-righteous, and mean.

When I can accept myself as I am, the good and the not so good, my relations with others definitely improve. I am able to learn, be empathetic, and be generous *without expectations*. I find that when I strive for acceptance of myself I am a much happier person. I wish I could say that I always am accepting. I am not. I am human. I have faults. I can say that I strive for this and today that will have to be enough.

“A Poem”

Really you mean I can never ever use again?
 Everyone does it, why can't I?
 Cause I break out in handcuffs?
 Oh, you mean "normal" people don't?
 Vile the bastard who use without consequence
 Endearing are those who have found it
 Recovery is a beautiful journey
 Yet mine has just begun, and I know I never HAVE to use again
 by: Russ B.

Haiku

A place to call home
 Home groups are where you can vote
 And be of service



(cont.) They were sharing their fear. I realized that I was not alone. I was not the only person who had gone through or done the things that I had experienced, or thought the way I did. They were sharing the same feelings that had caused my continued thoughts of suicide in the months before attending my first meeting. These people were fighting for a reason to continue living and to continue trying. Many times in my recovery I thought that I had done something so wrong and so despicable that everyone would walk away from me, and that I would find myself in that desperate place of complete shame and loneliness. My sponsor would listen to me confess what I had done. Then when I was about to say how I felt, she would tell me how she felt when she went through a very similar situation. Seeing that she made it through to the other side and that she was okay, gave me hope. That act of sharing experience, strength and hope would drive me to continue

trying to recover, and would help me to get through the following days, weeks or months. When I share what is truly going on with me today, people in the rooms let me know that they love me, they let me know that it will be okay, and they let me know that I am not the only one that has been through the situations that I'm going through, and that they made it through. With the help of the NA, I have come to learn that I don't have to curl up in a ball and quit and that I am human. "Hope lights a candle in the darkest of despairing hearts." I can never remember where this quote comes from, but it's one of my favorites. In my mind, Hope is a fundamental law that affects our will to live. If you're feeling hopeless, share at meetings until you find someone that can help light that candle of hope in you. If you're not feeling hopeless, help someone else by sharing your strength, experience and **HOPE**.

15 Ways to Confuse & Disturb Your Roommate

1. At random times Sit Up. Say, "Time to make the donuts." Leave. Do this often.
2. Every five minutes, get up, open the door, peek out, close the door and look relieved.
3. Express an extreme fear of sunlight. Move away from and flinch at areas of the room that are sunny.
4. Pick up the phone every five minutes and say, "hello". Look confused and hang up.
5. When listening to the radio, sing along with different lyrics and a different tune.
6. Unwrap a candy. Eat the wrapper and throw the chocolate away.
7. Constantly drink from an empty glass.
8. Address your roommate by a different name every time you talk to him or her.
9. Every time you handle something of your roommate's, use a tissue or gloves.
10. While unlocking your door with the key, complain that the engine won't start.
11. Name your animal crackers. Mourn for them after you eat them.
12. Get a pet rabbit. At a designated time everyday, take the rabbit into the bathroom and engage in loud shouting matches. If your roommate inquires, refuse to discuss the situation.
13. Try to make meals using your roommate's electric blanket.
14. Put black tape over the eyes of the people in your roommate's pictures. Complain that they were staring at you.
15. Every time your roommate falls asleep, wait ten minutes, wake them up and say, "it's time to go to bed now." (Not NA Suggestions)



What do you think got you to sit in this seat?

Was it a garden pest? The product of modern medicine? Or a cash crop from Persia? Maybe it was the people that raised you. Or the people you called friends. Did the "Man" have it out for you? Were you caught in a horrible misunderstanding? Does everyone just have their nose in your business? Is this punishment from that evil being some call God? Or perhaps, just maybe, there's a slim possibility that you screwed yourself by using drugs, people and places with your own two hands. Hmmm, I wonder which one it could be?
 by: Keith H.

A Few Humorous Zen-like Thoughts

1. Always remember you're unique. Just like everyone else.
2. Sex is like air. It's not important unless you aren't getting any.
3. Never test the depth of the water with both feet.
4. Everyone seems normal until you get to know them.
5. There is a fine line between "hobby" and "mental illness."
6. If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything.

The Group Conscience would like to hear from you. Please send us your submissions for future publications. Please, we only have so much room though, so if possible, keep your submissions to a reasonable length. We do reserve the right to edit length for purposes of clarity and publication space. Email all submissions, questions and whatever else to thegroupconscience@yahoo.com. Thank you!!!

***** October's topics of the month... *****

1. What does working the steps mean to you?
2. What is your favorite IP? Share your experience with it.