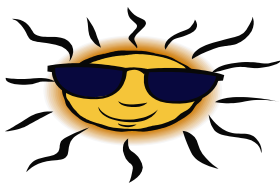


GuestHouse®

Alumni/Alumnae NEWS AND NOTES

**INSIDE THIS
ISSUE:**

“Little Things” Continued from Page 1	2
Request for Email Addresses	2
“Ants in the Rectory”	2
12-Step Meeting Etiquette	3
Cherokee Legend	3
Thought for the Day	4
Change of Address?	4
Plan Ahead! Future Events of 2011	4



Edited by:
Bob Martin

Staff:
Belinda Booker

“ L I T T L E T H I N G S ”
S U B M I T T E D B Y B O B M A R T I N

Ever had a bad day? Of course you have! Some days those little things which shouldn't bother us, do! Some days the service at McDonald's isn't up to our expectations of a gourmet restaurant. Some days we make mountains out of mole hills. Some days things just seem to snowball and everything goes downhill.

At meetings, it is occasionally heard that it's because we're alcoholic. But that just isn't so. It is really because we are humans; and that is part of the human condition. No matter how hard we try, we'll never be better than human! That's a mouthful, isn't it? It is really a cop out to blame alcohol for our problems. I haven't had a drink of alcohol for many years. How can I blame alcohol? Early in recovery, my sponsor challenged me to stop blaming alcoholism for anything. He told me that if I don't take responsibility for my actions, I'd remain miserable. “Drinking was but a symptom. We had to get down to causes and conditions.”

There are times that I can't even put my finger on what's wrong. Was it a person's tone of voice? Or attitude? Was it the look on someone's face? Did it remind me of my parents or some authority figure from my past? Was it the words that were used? Or was it me? Could it possibly have been that I was too Hungry, Angry, Lonely, or Tired? Was it my mood? Did I get up on the wrong side of the bed? Did I let myself get over-committed (again)? Were my expectations not met? Taking my inventory means asking where I was wrong. What might be bothering me today?

It's important for us to be aware of our behavior. Otherwise we can't change. Change is essential to growth.

The Big Book describes us as “restless, irritable and discontent,” and cautions us that many of our behaviors are the result of self-centered fear. It says that we are self-centered in the extreme. How do we change? Well, it takes time of course. But there are 12 Steps which, if followed, guarantee us a new way of living. We need to use them all.

The 10th Step tells us to stop and figure out what's wrong, take responsibility for it, and, if necessary, make amends. Maybe we just need to ask “How important is it?” Maybe I need to take a step back and start over. Maybe I need to change something about me. I have a friend who, when I tell him things are going wrong, asks me, “Which Step aren't you working Bob?” That one always gets me. And I usually find that when things are going wrong, it's almost always because I'm not working the Steps or I'm not praying. Always!

He went on to explain that we're all human and we should expect to have human reactions. So sometimes, we'll feel angry or get our feelings hurt or be depressed, and so on. When someone says something hurtful, we can expect to feel hurt or afraid or angry. That's the human reaction. But, what's your reaction to the reactions? A good measure of our spiritual condition is seen in our reaction to the hurt or anger, etc. Do I act out of anger or out of love? Do I hurt others because I've been hurt? Do I need to show others that I'm in control, even at their expense? Do I go on and on explaining myself so that others will understand my point of view and I'll win the argument? Often we can be right or we can be happy – but not both. We can win an argument but push people away. That seems like going back to “it's all about me.”

continued on Page 2

“ L I T T L E T H I N G S ”

We need to accept our humanity. Some time ago, in this column, I wrote a small piece on being human. Perhaps it would be good to repeat it here:

“Overcoming denial means intentionally and fully knowing oneself as a human being - warts and all. Being human means that you aren't everything you want to be - or everything you think you are - good or bad. Being human means that your thinking is sometimes irrational. It also means that every day you have thoughts you would not like to have shared with people around you. Being human means that you live in a body which might not be perfect and sometimes has pain and is getting older and probably is not in the same shape as what you see on TV and movies. Being human means you might not always have the kind of attitude you'd like to have. Being human means that you have those messy human feelings you wish would go away. Having feelings means that you sometimes make decisions based on feelings which aren't always in your best interest and sometimes hurt you and hurt people you love. Being human means that you can't do it alone - you need support. Being human also means that you are a child of Creation. A Loving God formed you and loves you as you are. Being human means that you are a spiritual being living in a physical body. Being human means that you are BOTH good and bad, BOTH saint and sinner, BOTH loving and selfish. Being human means that you have BOTH pain and pleasure. Being human means that you have needs that you can't always meet. Being human means that you are NOT in control.”

Being human isn't all negative. We are each gifted with mind and heart and wonderful senses to enjoy the world and to serve one another. We are all gifted and talented in tremendous ways – unique to us in a world filled with wonder. We each have many strengths in addition to any flaws we may have. We are made for great joy. God gave us a world filled with beauty and with pleasure. Being a good Christian doesn't mean we avoid all pleasure. But that we accept it with grateful hearts. Jesus came that we would enjoy life abundantly. There is a line in the sacred book of the Jews, the Talmud, that we will be responsible for all the pleasures of the world.

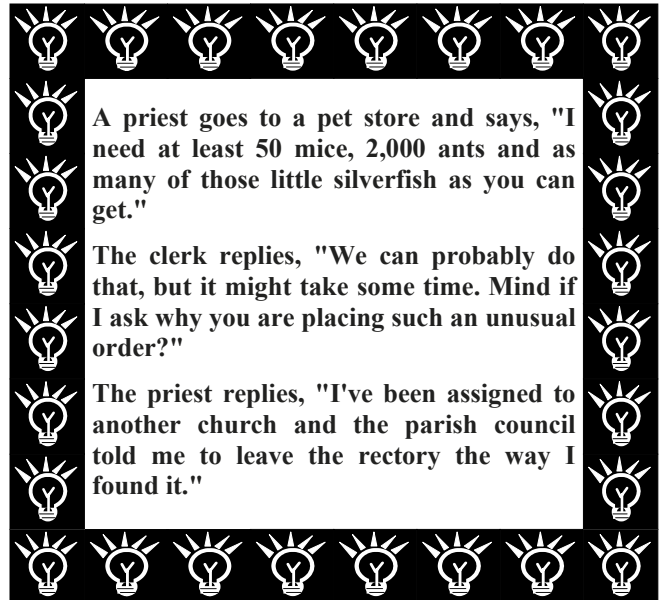
“Jesus didn't become a man to make us into gods. He came to help us be better as humans.”

So we begin by accepting our humanity. We take our 10th Step inventory. Then we let go. If you let go a little, you will have a little peace. If you let go a lot, you will have a lot of peace. It isn't our regrets, worries, fears, and insecurities that cause us to feel stress and pain. It's our unwillingness to let them go.

We can't quit drinking forever, so we learn to not drink today! In like manner, we can't let go of everything, so we learn to let go of this problem – just for today. We learn to

C O N T F R O M P A G E 1

take the next right step today. We can learn to let go of the little things that bug us and build up our confidence to deal with our problems in a better, healthier way. We can stop those little annoyances from dominating our day.



**WEBSITE:
WWW.GUESTHOUSE.ORG**

THE ALUMNI PAGE CAN BE
REACHED BY CLICKING IN THE
TOP RIGHT CORNER OF THE
HOME PAGE.

REQUEST FOR EMAIL ADDRESSES

Simply send an email to bbooker@guesthouse.org and put "email address" in the subject line. We will add your email address to our alumni contacts and you will receive future alumni communication from Guest House by email. It's that easy!

If you do not send us your email address you will continue to receive alumni mailings as you have in the past. Thank you for doing your part to help Guest House fulfill its mission.

1 2 - S T E P M E E T I N G E T I Q U E T T E

1. Bring your Big Book to EVERY meeting. We lead by example.
 2. Get to the meeting early, not late. Practice being happy!
 3. Introduce yourself and greet people before AND after the meeting, especially those alone, that you've never met and/or look scared. Let's practice being nice.
 4. Go to the bathroom and get your drinks BEFORE the meeting starts.
 5. Cell phone OFF. NO USAGE! NONE. Let's pay attention and relax.
 6. During the preamble, read along (silently) in your Big Book to lead by example and to practice being in the here and now.
 7. During the meeting; NO talking to your neighbors. It's disruptive.
 8. Contribute the price of a drink (if working) or something (if not working), and be discreet.
 9. In a 12-Step meeting introduce yourself as an addict. (Not "and a...")
 10. Meetings allow each member to share their experiences once during each session. (Unless all have talked and there's still time.)
 11. The discussion limit is 3 minutes or less. Don't be selfish.
 12. No direct advice or telling another member what to think or how to behave is tolerated. We are NOT therapists. Stick to the topic.
 13. We share in a general way what we used to be like, what happened and what we are like now. Talk about "issues" after the meeting. Talk in "I" terms (not "we" or "you").
 14. Only topics with relation to alcohol or conflicts in living related to the Twelve Steps are encouraged. Let's talk solutions!
 15. Relate only YOUR personal experiences; theoretical moralizing/opinions are discouraged. Let's end with a solution from the Big Book.
 16. After the close, go say "Hi" to a newcomer and help them feel welcome.
 17. Thank the chair and/or speaker; congratulate the celebrants/chip recipients; welcome the out-of-towners.
- Pray before and during the meeting: "God please direct my thinking, show me how I can fit myself to be of maximum service to You and Your Children."

Cherokee Legend

Do you know the legend of the Cherokee Indian youth's rite of Passage?

His father takes him into the forest, blindfolds him and leaves him alone.

He is required to sit on a stump the whole night and not remove the blindfold until the rays of the morning sun shine through it. He cannot cry out for help to anyone.

Once he survives the night, he is a MAN.

He cannot tell the other boys of this experience, because each lad must come into manhood on his own.

The boy is naturally terrified. He can hear all kinds of noises. Wild beasts must surely be all around him.

Maybe even some human might do him harm. The wind blew the grass and earth, and shook his stump, but he sat stoically, never removing the blindfold. It would be the only way he could become a man!

Finally, after a horrific night the sun appeared and he removed his blindfold. It was then that he discovered his father sitting on the stump next to him. He had been at watch the entire night, protecting his son from harm.

We, too, are never alone. Even when we don't know it, God is watching over us, sitting on the stump beside us. When trouble comes, all we have to do is reach out to Him.

Moral of the story:
Just because you can't see God, doesn't mean God is not there. 'For we walk by faith, not by sight.'



Thought for the Day

Bob Martin publishes a "Thought for the Day." They are posted on the following weblog or "Blog": <http://recoverythought.livejournal.com/>

Just type in the address and hit enter. Some people bookmark the site. Suggestions are welcome at bobmich@mac.com.

The daily thoughts are a collection of quotes, stories and reflections of a spiritual nature for use in prayer, reflection or discussion.

Moving? Change of Address?

Name: _____

New Address: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Email: _____

Send to: Guest House - Outreach Dept.
1601 Joslyn Road
Lake Orion, MI 48360

Phone: 800-626-6910

Fax: 248-391-0210

Email: bbooker@guesthouse.org

PLAN AHEAD! FUTURE EVENTS OF 2011

Regional Seminars

● **Tampa, FL**

Franciscan Retreat Center
January 17-21, 2011

● **Techny, IL**

Techny Towers Conference Center
June 6-9, 2011

● **Niagara Falls, ON**

Carmelite Centre—Canada
June 20-23, 2011

● **Malibu, CA**

Serra Retreat Center
September 19-22, 2011

Alumni Association Men's Retreat

Scripps Mansion, Lake Orion, MI
May 9-12, 2011

Alumni/Alumnae Association Conference & Reunion

Scripps Mansion, Lake Orion, MI
August 2-4, 2011

Contact for all events: Belinda Booker

Phone: 800-626-6910

Fax: 248-391-0210

Email: bbooker@guesthouse.org