

# INTO ACTION

## Step 12

Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, *we tried to carry this message to alcoholics*, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

## WORKING WITH OTHERS

BB, Page 92

### THE PROBLEM:

Give him an account of the struggles you made to stop. Show him the mental twist which leads to the first drink of a spree.

BB, Page 93

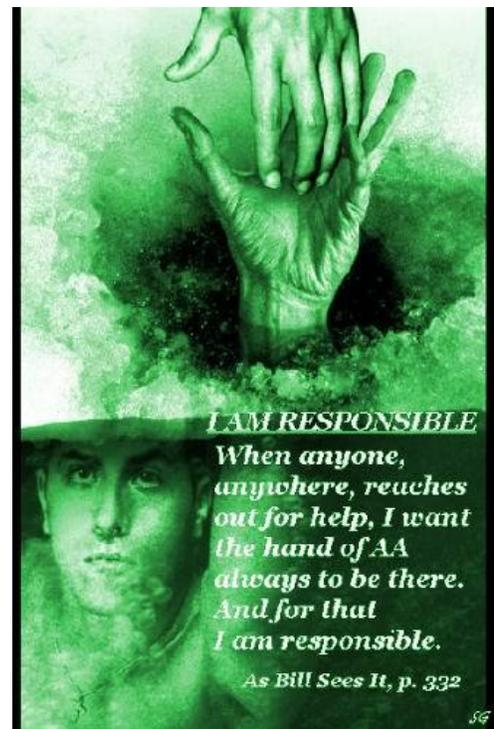
### THE SOLUTION:

*Tell him exactly what happened to you. Stress the spiritual feature freely. If the man be agnostic or atheist, make it emphatic that he does not have to agree with your conception of God.*

BB, Page 94

### THE PROGRAM of ACTION:

Outline the program of action, explaining how you made a self-appraisal, how you straightened out your past and why you are now endeavoring to be helpful to him.



# Voices of District 11

## WORKING STEP 12

Through working each step to the best of our ability, we have had many little spiritual experiences that help us to grow in love and gratitude. We are now ready to put that love to work in Step 12 by trying to carry this AA message to the still suffering alcoholic.

Let's face it, much of society has given up on this active alcoholic, as much as the alcoholic has given up on herself. She's not looking great, maybe not smelling great, and for sure not thinking great. But through our Higher Power's grace, we are able to bring kindness and hope and love. Whether it is through sharing at a meeting, taking or making a phone call, or actively sponsoring, we extend love and tolerance.

This is certainly a learning process for most of us. "She shouldn't attend my meeting if she's still drinking.". "She should go back out till she reaches her real bottom!". Some of us might have felt that way until we heard our more experienced sponsors say: "We should try to keep her bottom as high as possible!". "The only requirement to attend a meeting is a desire to stop drinking." And not only newcomers need our love and tolerance. As we grow in sobriety, that prickly side of us appears from time to time.

Here's a little porcupine story: in the beginning porcupines all lived in one nest. But because of their long and pointy quills one porcupine was always poking another porcupine causing injuries and bad feelings. The porcupines decided to go out of the nest and go it alone. But the strong feelings of loneliness and abandonment were more than the porcupines could bear. They returned to the nest. They all agreed that the occasional prick was a small and temporary price to pay for the greater blessings of togetherness.

## Here is a great Twelfth Step Prayer:

**"Dear God. Having had a spiritual experience I must now remember that faith without works is dead and practical experience shows that nothing will so much ensure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics. So God, please help me to carry this message to other alcoholics! Provide me with the guidance and wisdom to talk with another alcoholic because I can help when no one else can. Help me secure her confidence and remember she is ill."**

Submitted by Pat C.

## NIA 20 Spring Conference *Sunlight Of The Spirit* **March 2-4, 2012**

Georgios Banquets and Comfort Inn Suites  
<http://www.georgios.com>  
8800 West 159th St., Orland Park, IL, US,  
60462-5618  
Phone: (708) 403-1100 Fax: (708) 403-1105

**For more Information**  
**Contact: Debbie G. 815-693-7142 or**  
**Heather S. 815-468-7890**

Volunteers are needed for hospitality.  
Contact Michele L. 815-530-1844



**ONLINE CONFERENCE  
REGISTRATION\*:**



[www.niaspringconference.com](http://www.niaspringconference.com)

**INTOACTION Editorial Policy**

INTOACTION News is a bimonthly newsletter of District 11; NIA 20 of Alcoholics Anonymous. It is about, by and for the Members of the Fellowship of AA. Opinions expressed herein are NOT to be attributed to AA as a whole, nor does publication of information imply any endorsement by AA. Quotations and artwork from AA literature are reprinted with permission from AA World Service, Inc. and/or The AA Grapevine; Inc. Submissions are edited for space and clarity ONLY. Contact information is required and anonymity is respected.

**12 Steps A Poem**

I can't do this one on my own.  
I took two steps, began to pray  
Restore me God, please now, today.

I took three steps, gave up my will  
Maybe God loves me still.  
I took a fourth, I looked inside  
Nothing more would I hide.

And on the fifth, I said aloud  
I've done some wrong, and I'm not proud.  
I took six steps, and got prepared  
To lose the defects, I was scared.

Now I'm at seven, take them away  
My God, for this I do pray.  
And on eight, the list was long  
Amends to make for all the wrong.

I took nine steps, put down my pride  
Amends made, I will not hide.  
Ten steps I take, each day I pray  
I make amends along the way.

And on eleven I pray to know  
Each day His will, which way to go.  
I took twelve steps, I'm like a bird  
To others now, I spread the word.....  
(Author anonymous)

**THE DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE OF IA IS Sunday—JANUARY 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2012.**  
**THE THEME FOR THE Feb/March 2012 ISSUE OF INTOACTION IS; ACCEPTANCE, or anything you wish to submit.**

**INTOAction:** District 11's Newsletter  
Editor: David Gilbert 815-344-6523  
E-mail: [Soulsurgery@comcast.net](mailto:Soulsurgery@comcast.net)

**D**istrict 11's G.S.R. Meetings Are Held On 1st Thursday of the Month at the McHenry Alano Club; 409 Front Street-Unit D (route 31) McHenry, IL



**District Meeting 7:30 PM**

**DISTRICT 11's WEB SITE:**↓  
<http://www.aa-nia-dist11.org>  
**DISTRICT 11 SECRETARY:**↓  
[aadistrict11sec@yahoo.com](mailto:aadistrict11sec@yahoo.com)  
**SOBERFEST WEB SITE:**↓  
<http://www.soberfest.org/>  
**NIA 20 EVENTS WEB SITE:**↓  
<http://www.aa-nia.org/events.html>  
**Live Links**

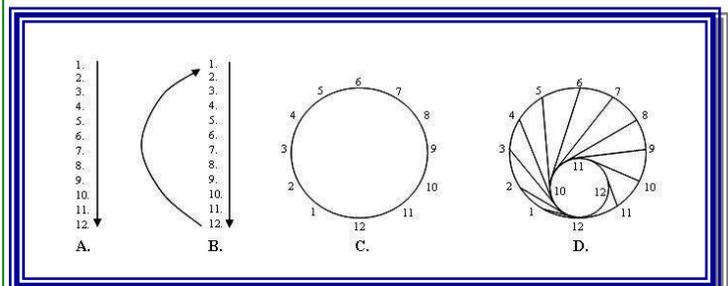
**\*\*SCHEDULE INFO CHANGES:**  
**PLEASE E-MAIL** Bill J. ~ ~ EMAIL to:  
[schedulemaker@ymail.com](mailto:schedulemaker@ymail.com)

**CONTRIBUTIONS**

From Group (Name) \_\_\_\_\_  
Group #: \_\_\_\_\_  
Dist. #: \_\_\_\_\_  
Meeting City: \_\_\_\_\_

Northern Illinois District Eleven  
P.O. Box 846  
McHenry, IL 60051-0846  
N.I.A. Treasurer  
Northern Illinois Area, Ltd.  
P.O. Box 3926  
St. Charles, IL 60174  
The General Service Office  
AAWS  
P.O. Box 459  
Grand Central Station  
New York, NY 10163-0459

Mail Contributions to:



# DCM REPORT

## December 1st, 2011

Hi Everybody,

I attended Soberfest and had a great time as always. District 11 has traditionally hosted a panel or workshop so I put something together this year sort of last minute that was a lot of fun. The topic of the panel was "The Homegroup" and I had three speakers: Kathy O. from West Virginia, Matt M. from California, and Janet N. from District 10 in Illinois. We did not have an excellent turn out but the speakers did great and I really enjoyed it.

The Winter Assembly is Saturday December 10<sup>th</sup> at St. Thomas More School right down the street in Elgin. The flier boasts baristas serving coffee, espresso, and lattes. GSR's play the most important role in our service structure because they attend assemblies voting their group's conscience and then carry information back to their group. When GSR's do attend district meetings and assemblies that vital part of our service structure falls apart. It is also extremely helpful for committee chairs and alternate chairs to attend to let the area know what is working in District 11 and also to get new ideas for service within our district. It would probably benefit all newly elected committee chairs and alternates immensely to attend this assembly. Registration begins at 8am, meeting starts at 9am, lunch will be served for \$8. I hope to see you all there!

And lastly, I do not think that I will be able to make the December District 11 meeting due to school. I am disappointed at not being able to be there and I apologize to all. I want to thank you all for giving me the opportunity to serve as DCM for the past two years and also for serving with me. It has been a great pleasure and I send you all my Blessings.

Brandon Long

DCM District 11, Area 20

# District 11 Meeting Minutes for November 3rd, 2011

(Editor's Note: Dates and times contained in the following minutes are a reflection from the minutes taken on November 3rd, 2011 not the date of the meeting. (SOME UPDATES ARE NOTED- T

Meeting Time: 7:30 PM  
 Attendance: 34  
 Committee Members 12  
 Groups Represented: 29

**Anniversaries** Chuck 18 years, Dave 17 years, Brad 3 years  
 Congratulation on all anniversaries

**Secretary's Report:** Glen R (Terry G alt.)  
 Written committee report forms must be submitted to the secretary to be included in the minutes. The new E-Mail for the secretary is [aadistrict11sec@yahoo.com](mailto:aadistrict11sec@yahoo.com)

**Treasurers Report:**  
 Beginning balance 4923.70  
 Income 1686.00  
 Expenses 804.27  
 Ending balance 5806.43



**DCM's Report: Brandon L (alt David G)**  
 Mentioned the Remember November program where we are asked to donate to GSO a dollar for each year of sobriety. These funds may be gathered by special collections and sent to GSO.  
 Went over the ground work for the upcoming elections of chair's and co-chairs.  
 A motion was presented that all alternate chair position other than the DCM and Treasure, have a one year requirement of sobriety. This motion was passed.

## Election Results

DCM	Dave G.
Alt-DCM	Jennifer A
Secretary	Terry G
Alt secretary	Lynn V
Treasurer	David C
Alt. Treas.	Mark J

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS  
 A LIFE CENTERED ON HELPING OTHERS LIVE IN  
 COMPLETE SOBRIETY -- ANONYMOUS NOT OUR  
 NAMES YIELDS MAINTENANCE OF UNITY & SERVICE  
**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

Public information	Open	~
Alt Pub Info	Open	~
	Carol H	
	Jessica W	
	Kevin K	
Alt hosp & treatment	Open	~
CPC	Open	~
Alt CPC	Open	~
Answering service	Mitch P	
Alt answer serv.	Pat C	
Grapevine	Open	~
Alt grapevine	Open	~
Special Needs	Open	~
Alt special needs	Open	~
Webmaster	Doug W	
Alt web	Ric J.	

**Please take this back to your groups to help fill the open space needed. And thanks for those people who stepped up for service work.**

**Public Information Report** Nick (alt Brian B)  
 No Report

**Hospital & Treatment Report** Mike R (alt Kevin K)  
 Attended the bridge the gap presentation at Condell Hospital with Hosp & Treatment committee from district 10/12. Hospitals are resupplied. New volunteers for south street sign up sheet would like it returned next month, then we can update the volunteer list.

**Corrections Report:** Chuck L, (alt Carol H)  
 No report. **(SEE ARTICLE PAGE 6)**



(Continued from page 4)

**CPC Report:** John S: (alt Nate P)

No report...

**Answering service** Fred G chair (alt Mitch P)

Total calls 70-- 46 meeting info, 3 open meetings  
10 to speak with AA member, 1 NA, 1-treatment info  
1 - 12 step calls 1 out of district, 4- al-anon 1-needed  
ride, 1-out of district

0-10 min 62, 13-20 min -8, 0 -30 min 0 over 30 min

**Archives Report:** Clarence J, (alt open)

Tentative date for 2012 Old timer's brunch is Feb 19  
in Wauconda

**Grapevine Report:** Jessica W, (alt Brad B)

Will be stepping down, Plan to have Grapevine  
display at upcoming Sober fest.

**Special Needs Report:** Pat C, (alt chuck d)

NO REPORT

**LCM Report:** John F, (alt open) \

No report

**Workshop open**

**UP DATED by Editor:**

**Newsletter Report:** Dave G,

The deadline for February/March Issue of  
**INTO ACTION** is January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2012 and the  
THEME is ACCEPTANCE or anything you wish.  
Share your group's, committee or personal  
experience, strength and hope, events or news.

**IF SOMEONE DESIRES TO TAKE OVER THE  
NEWSLETTER, Please let me know. I'LL**

**HELP AS LONG AS YOU NEED.** It requires  
sacrifice but it is well worth it. David Gilbert –  
815-344-6523---Soulsurgery@comcast.net

**Webmaster Report:** Doug W.

We will conduct a complete review of the current site  
content. Any committee wishing to update their  
specific page feels free to contact us. We would like  
to thank Chuck T for his service.

**Schedule Maker Report:** Bill J.

No report

**Old Business:**

None

**New Business**

None

**UP DATED BY Editor:  
Upcoming events**

**Dec. 10<sup>th</sup> - Winter Assembly  
hosted by District 22, St. Thomas  
More School, 1625 W Highland  
Ave, Elgin IL 60123,**

Chris 847-997-2102

**Jan. 21<sup>st</sup> Hinckley Big Book  
Study Group 14th Anni-  
versary Pork Chop Dinner,**

**Open 4:30, Serving 5:00-**

**7:00, Meeting 7:30 pm, Hinckley/**

**Big Rock High School, 700 E Linco  
Hwy (Rte 30), Hinckley, IL, Kay 815-200-1000**

**Feb. 03<sup>rd</sup> -05<sup>th</sup> The Usual Suspects Men's Retreat,**  
*Inspiration Ctr,*

*Walworth, WI, Joe 815-728-1281*

**Feb. 10<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> Heart to Heart Women's Retreat,**  
*Inspiration Ctr, Walworth,*

*WI, Debbi 815-728-1281*

**Feb. 25<sup>th</sup> -27<sup>th</sup> ISCYPAA (Illinois State  
Conference of Young People**

**in AA), Schaumburg Hyatt, 1800 East Golf Rd,  
Schaumburg,**

*IL 60173 James 563-650-6386*

**March 02<sup>nd</sup> -04<sup>th</sup>, NIA Spring Conference  
sponsored by District 52,**

*Georgio's Comfort Inn & Conf Ctr, 8800 W 159th St,  
Orland Park, 708-328-6786, Heather 815-468-7890  
or www.niaspringconference.com*

**June 22<sup>nd</sup> -24<sup>th</sup> 12th Annual MMAAC Midwest  
Motorcycle AA Convention,**

*Pearl City, IL 61062, www.mmaac.org*

**Open Mic**

**Anne---**There will be an open meeting  
Thanksgiving day at Christ the king church in  
wonder lake, at 10am.

**Mitch**—Tuesday night meeting at St Barnabas  
Church in Cary has a new time at 7:30PM

**Dave** –Alden terrace grapevine meeting has a new  
starting time at 3:30 pm on Saturdays

**UP DATED BY Editor -**

**\*\*\*\* The next district meeting will be held on  
Thursday, January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2012**

**Respectfully Submitted, Glen Reid, Secretary,  
Terry G. alt secretary**





**Recently, I was visiting a residential group in Stateville. This is a maximum security Correctional Facility here in Illinois. I spoke to a group of men there to share my experience, strength and HOPE. And this is how it went...**

“Hi, and welcome... my name is...Chuck L., I’d like to talk about “CHOICES” .So let’s start out with something you could call...  
**“ORIGINS OF LIFE CHOICES”**

As a child, many of our choices are made for us by our parents, or maybe our grandparents. By whomever our caregivers were. We are told what to eat, what to wear, where to live, when to go to bed and when to get up.

When I was a kid, both my Parents worked. My Mom worked nights, waiting tables and bartending. My Dad worked the day shift for waste management. He went to work at 4:30 while we were still asleep. Like I said my Mom worked nights and would be sleeping while me and my (3) sisters got ready for school. We’d have cereal for breakfast; make a sandwich for lunch and we were off... That’s how I remember my mornings... Quiet and uneventful ...School was good then, I was happy to be there. One year I even managed PERFECT attendance. I was recognized by the whole class and was awarded a gift. It was something special... I remember.... Feeling proud!

My Mom & Dad had established an array of chores we were accountable for. I didn’t have a choice in anything! We’d get home after school, and rush to get our chores done.

My Dad hung out at the Tavern after work. Mom & Dad seemed to never be home at the same time.

He would call the house everyday at 4:30 and tell us what he wanted for dinner and when he’d be home. He always said 5 o’clock but he’d rarely make it.

When we had dinner there was to be no talking, no chewing with your mouth open... Simply put, no goofing around. Eat all you had on your plate because you weren’t excused until it was gone. No one could leave until my father was finished. He ate so darn slow! I remember one evening I kept asking him if I could go, and after the 3<sup>rd</sup> time he said “3 strikes you’re OUT”! He backhanded me knocking me and my chair over busting open my lip and I cut my head on the refrigerator door handle behind me.

This is about how “I” learned. How...to make choices. What guided me make them. How I was to friend other people. How I was to father my children, in fact how I was to live my life.

I was a pretty good kid, mostly seen and not heard at that age. My heart was empty though. Waking up with my Mom & Dad fighting at 1 or 2 A.M. scared and unable to go back to sleep. Trembling... the yelling & crying, hearing things break! I had no control... I knew what my will would do or say but that wasn’t happening in my world...not at that time.



*(Continued on the next page)*

(Continued from page 6)

When we are adolescents or teens, we begin to make choices as an expression of our independence from our parents. We choose who we hang out with, typically what we wear, how we behave at home and at school. Sometimes we lead a double life, one for home and one for school. Most of our choices are learned by watching others.

As I got older, I started spending more time away from the calamity at home. I'd go to my friend's house. All my friends' parents thought I was the best! After all I had been trained, right? I'd always help with the groceries or the yard work. The coolest part was when they would make me something to eat. The choice of lunchmeat with or without cheese... was like ordering off a menu to me. I learned how to grease the wheels to get what I wanted. To get what I never had at home. There were no options at home. The options were the bare hand, the belt, or having to stay home in my room. Most times I would take the whipping instead to being locked in.



As things were turning out, I didn't like how I was feeling. I couldn't ever get it right with my Dad and my Mom was unknown. She was never around. When we were younger, he'd come home drunk, wake us up and we'd go through the gamut of what we did and didn't do that day. All (4) of us kids would be standing in a line, my Dad on the couch, smoking and drinking and rambling on about anything... Talking about all that he does for his family and how important his family was. So important, that he would do anything to provide for them. He would even steal a loaf of bread to keep them from being hungry. In the meantime he'd pass out with a lit Pall Mall cigarette in his hand, burning down. We'd panic because we were too scared to wake him by removing the cigarette before it burned him. I didn't know would be the right choice then? It seemed to be lose, lose...

At nine years old I chose to change my world... like I said, things weren't so good... I stole some marijuana from my parents and began getting high. It was like water off a ducks back. It gave me a sense of ease and comfort. It was an escape from reality. Cuz nothing changed outside of my head. At the age of 13 my older sister ran away from home. Clearly that was her escape. She left home after being raped by a high school student. My parents found it hard to believe her. It was a terrible event... My others sisters ran off too, Laura at 12 and Tina at 14.

I hated my Mom & Dad. My Dad whipped us all the time and my Mom didn't do anything about it. Her solution was to disappear. She left my Dad during my freshman year in High School. By this time I was high every day and was drinking 4-5 nights a week. I was a sophomore in High School. I worked part time at a restaurant / bar and stole beer and booze all the time. It was just my Dad and I then.



When we become adults, we have more control over the choices we make. I know that it might not seem like it, but the reality is that we make choices based on past experience or belief and develop patterns that may be good for us or bad for us.

You know, the lesson I learned about "self" preservation... that stealing was OK... If you had to... If you had good enough reason to. As well as taking care of "myself". When a situation wasn't comfortable or I didn't feel right, I knew I could change that by getting high or drunk! Have you ever thought of how others are affected by yours actions before you act? I hadn't a clue then. I started to steal everything I could get my hands on. I started selling drugs. I was often suspended from school for drinking, getting high and cutting class or not showing up at all. Things were getting worse across the board. My Dad found (4) pounds of weed under my bed and beat me bloody with his belt. (Continued on the next page)

*(Continued from page 7)*

From upstairs to down stairs and out the back door I ran. I never cried. It never helped. He chased me for a couple blocks and yelled after me "don't bother coming back"!

## Northern Illinois Area 20 and DuPage County District 41

**Sponsor:**

# Volunteering: Into the Correction Facilities

**"What is available and  
How to get involved."**

**December 3rd, 2011**

**from 9:15 a.m. to 3:45 p.m.**

**Meet and Greet, refreshments and  
coffee 9:15 to 9:50 a.m.**

**Light lunch will also be served**

# December 3

**Jim M.**— J.U.S.T. DuPage County Jail

**Bill K.**— Northern Illinois Facilities  
screening processor for AA

**John R.**— N.I. Area corrections chairman

**Jeff R.**— AA sponsorship for Sheridan

**Tommy B.**— Area 19 Corrections Chairman

**Nicole S.**— Area 19 Bridging the Gap,  
Inmate re-entry program

## First Congregational Church

235 S Kenilworth Ave  
(at Church St)

**Elmhurst, IL 60126**

(Enter by the North Doors)

INFO: Chris T. =708-483-8522

I was 15. That was really something I thought. I always stuck around. Because it was just him, and me... in fact, earlier that year I came home to

find the tub in his room filled with bloody water and blood all over his bedroom. I couldn't find anyone in the house. I called the hospital to find that he attempted suicide and called for an ambulance. In my head I'm thinking, he's checking out from this earth and I'm left alone on it? I couldn't understand why he would do that to me?

At 16, my senior year, I was locked up for residential Burglary and sentenced to 60 days in the County jail and 2 years probation. As soon as I got out I went right back to the same crowd, the same activities. I just cared less. My inhibitions and fears were fading away and didn't care what anybody thought. I had been on my own ripping off whatever I could to eat drink and be merry. I was living in single room rentals above bars or staying at some dope or party house, I was on my own. I had gotten 2 D.U.I.'s in short order and lost my driver's license. It wasn't long before I was arrested again for Burglary. I had accumulated a number of cases prior to that. Small drug possession, fire arms, battery, vandalism or criminal damage to property so at 17, the judge gave me (1) year in the Department of Corrections at Vandalia and (5) years probation for the Burglaries and violating my (2) year Probation. I was released about 10 months later. I tried staying right. I didn't do any crime other than drinking and getting high. I couldn't find work though. I could only labor; I hadn't even graduated High School. I requested my probation to be transferred to Houston, Texas where a friend of mine from school moved to. I was able to get my Drivers License there and was working at a car wash / gas station. I hated it. Let's face it. Easy money was more my liking. I was drinking and getting High and we would go out early in the Morning pick Mushrooms and just waist our day away. I had no money and in a very short time did what I always did Burglary. Was arrested and sent to (2) years in the Texas Department of Corrections. That was a world I never knew existed.

The Officers were called Boss and we were referred to as Convict. I worked in the Fields 8-10 hours a day. It was a living nightmare.

*(Continued on the next page)*

*(Continued from page 8)*

Certainly an education of “hard knocks” I had or have never since experienced. I paroled to a halfway house in Fort Worth after 16 months. I was out a week and got a job at a furniture factory. On my way home from my first day I stopped and got drunk, went back to sign in at the house and caused a scene at the front desk. They let me slide. I couldn’t believe they didn’t violate me.

I was doing well at my job and Friday afternoon, (2) weeks out of the Department of Corrections, was riding home with another guy working and living same place I was. He got pulled over for a traffic violation, we gave up our identification. Within five minutes they extracted me from the car and arrested me for a fugitive’s warrant of \$250,000.00. They treated me like Charles Manson. Come to find out the State of Illinois violated me for the (5) years probation I had transferred to Texas because of the crime I got (2) years for in Houston. Now that’s a double bubble don’t you think? Well they came and got me, brought me back to Illinois before the judge and gave me the (5) years in the D.O.C.. I did 2 ½ years and got my hundo and a bus ticket and was gone.

#### HOW CHOICES AFFECT OUR LIVES

- 1) We go through life making choices guided by our past accumulation of learning and baggage.
- 2) How we treated life and made choices in the past will have a great effect on us throughout our life.
- 3) By making no choice, we actually have made a choice, haven’t we?
- 4) What we learn today, coupled with our past experience, can change the choices we make for the future. I have made some tough choices to get here today.

At that point I didn’t give a rats behind about anyone. The truth of it was that I was desperate, scared and alone. I accepted myself as one of the 1%er’s. My lot in life, I didn’t expect to last long. I found myself to be just like I was raised, violent & indifferent. After all doesn’t everyone who had been raised like I was turn out the same way? A criminal, an alcoholic, an addict? Isn’t

that how it’s supposed to be? No!!! No it’s not! I was a creator of circumstances in my life. Where ever I was, I produced chaos. So, the consequences in my life I now know to be the direct result of my actions. I couldn’t figure it out. My best thinking, my best choices, was what I was living with and it wasn’t working. I was released from prison for the last time when I was 22 years old. I saw and participated in a lot of stuff. I don’t have to tell ya’ll that. I was a different man. I managed to get through the school of “hard knocks” and was even more angry and cold when I hit the streets.



**CROSS ROADS**

#### WHAT ABOUT YOUR CHOICES IN PRISON?

On the outside we make around **225 choices** per day. In prison, so many choices are made for us that the number drops

down to **25** per day: When to go to the house, when to shower, what and when to eat, what to wear, what work assignment, when to make a phone call... the list goes on and on. You do have choices about how to do your time. What kind of person do you want to be in here? Here are a few examples, I am sure you will recognize some of these:

One we might call..**The Loner**. The Loner, stays in his house and rarely mixes with others. He goes to work, the store or chow and back to the house. A loner is at risk...Others may perceive that you are weak or a little crazy. The loner may get flak on the line as others try to take advantage of him.

How about...**The Gang Member**. We all have the need to belong or be accepted by others. In some institutions, the pressure to join is tremendous. This kind of person may be asked to do something that is worse than what got him in prison in the first place.

*(Continued on the next page)*

(Continued from page 9)

**One may also be a connection** for others, runs drugs, or arranges sex...who knows what. Sometimes he may hang with others who have chosen that route to pick up the remnants of power and commissary that come along.

Then **There's the hardhead**, someone who keeps running into walls with other inmates and staff...he never seems to learn how to get along. This is another rough road because everyone around you is on guard at all times.



Or even **A Negative Leader**. This road is usually a no win situation; the choices one made on the street got him here and now he

is doing it again. Hard time or another case for those actions is generally the results of making this mistake again.

**Finally, there's the independent**, someone who does their time different, their way. This could be you; they are open to change and ways to get by without a hassle. You **don't make any big statements** that will cause you grief. When you do make a change in your life, be ready for the other residents to test you. They will **chase you all** over the yard to get you to break your word. This is a path that may have a lot of risk, yet also a lot of reward. It is easy to be a follower...and very difficult to choose to make your own way.

### WHAT DO YOU DO ABOUT CHOICES?

**A choice can be a response to life, not just a reaction.** Maybe up to now you have reacted to every event in your life based on what you learned. To take control of life, change needs to take place...move from reacting to events to responding to those same events. A reaction is an emotional reflex; a response is a considered action. **It takes a lot of practice for one to make that important change.**

### *Please Write this down:* **EVENT + REACTION = WHAT YOU GET!**

Let me give you an example... I made a decision in 1992 to quit drinking and using. I went into the County treatment facility and subsequently joined the AA Program. I never wanted to admit that alcohol was my master. I never wanted to admit in many respects worse than my Father. As the result of willingness to change and to allow new people and new Principles govern my way of acting & thinking, my life has changed. I started recognizing wrong thinking & wrong acting and replacing them with right thinking and corrected action or response. I had to first recognize that my impulse or instinct was molded by many years of influence. Things began to get better. I got a degree, change in vocation, family etc... Life's package was beginning to look different.

Till one day, I got a call from my Mom. My youngest sister Laura was in the hospital on life support. She had been diagnosed with Lymphoma Cancer. She was on a ventilator and on the 6<sup>th</sup> day, my Mom & Dad announced that they had decided to "pull the plug". I felt so overwhelmed and hopeless. She was just 27! I hadn't seen her since she left home almost 15 years before that. Now, I'm living with this new outlook on life. Things had changed for me I thought, it could for her too. I left the hospital with guilt and remorse.



***Just when the caterpillar thought the world was over, it became a butterfly.***

Fear took over and I turned to the solution I have so many times in the past. I curled up in a bottle and escaped. I got drunk.

(Continued on the next page\_

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### ***It's a Beautiful Thing!***

man ran a red light and T-boned the passenger's side of my car.

He hit me, but I was loaded and it was me who went back to Jail for my 6<sup>th</sup> D.U.I., that after 30 months of sobriety. I had just gotten my driver's license back after 13 years of revocation. I was married for (2) years, had (2) children at the time... my reaction changed "our" world in a heartbeat! Not just mine, my decision affected many. I see that now...

Only when **we look at our lives in retrospect** do we see the big picture...how the choices in the past have been a reaction to the conditions around us for the moment. Moving out of the immediate need and seeing what **effect our choices caused** can give new perspective. What if you looked forward into the future to consider the effect of your choices? How would that affect the decisions you make today? Economically? Environmentally? Socially? **Make choices in your life that respond** to events with consideration of and an eye to the future. Please

***Write this down:***

**EVENT + RESPONSE = WHAT YOU WANT!**

My 6<sup>th</sup> D.U.I. was on March 31, 1994 and I have been making decisions followed up with action ever since. Otherwise, it's just a decision, nothing happens until I do something. I can share one event with you that rocked my world in a big way! In fact, was nearly devastating! In 2008 my wife found a package of heroin in my Step-daughters room under the mattress. We didn't really know what it was. I had only done the

My reaction or instinct took over and found myself driving on the west side with one of my old drinking buddies. A

Dope once, having found it in a purse stolen while at a bar 25 years ago. I didn't know it was possible to snort it, and that was how she was using. She said twice and she was hooked. Sure we had suspicions about maybe some weed but thought all kids experiment.

After all, there was no history with her Mom or Dad. I Responded rather than reacted. After all my experience when I was found out, was a belt across my face, arms and back, and that didn't work for me..I offered Love rather than discipline or punishment. We talked about where I had come from. Everyone knew I was active in the Program. I had learned it was best to be kind rather than needing to be right. Proving she was wrong would have only been about me, about me being right. It took a few days... and it was painful; more painful for her, than for us. She was the one dope sick. I wouldn't have realized that if I didn't step back, take a moment, and then act. Trying to make an intelligent decision based in emotions seldom works. The situation was already bad so why make it worse by trying to impose MY WILL on her? She went to treatment and after a year and a half, has been able to stay clean. It could have turned out differently. I'm grateful that it has worked out, that we can choose differently.

### **THE OUTCOME WILL BE DIFFERENT**

**In order to make significant kinds of change**, to make different, better choices and meet life with a response rather than a reaction, we need to think about ourselves: **who we are, how we feel, who and what are important to us, the choices we have made and where they have taken us and whether we wish to change some of that. We also need to think about the choices we will make in the future and the direction we wish our lives to go.**

Our choices ***will determine*** the outcome of our life. Please bow your heads for two minutes of silent meditation. Remember... there is no "way" to Peace PEACE "is" the way."

***You're out-going Corrections Chair, Chuck L.***



# WINTER ASSEMBLY

**December 10, 2011**

(Hosted by D22)

St. Thomas More School  
1625 West Highland Ave.  
Elgin, IL.



Registration Begins: 8:00 A.M.  
Meeting begins 9:00 A.M.  
Lunch will be served. \$8.00

The baristas from the Woman's New Beginnings group will be providing coffee, espresso and latte's.

Information Contact:  
Chris D. 847-997-2102  
[cdegrane@comcast.net](mailto:cdegrane@comcast.net)



Contact the NIA special needs chair (Heather S. [shannon891@att.net](mailto:shannon891@att.net)) no later than 2 weeks prior to assembly if an interpreter is needed.

***District 22***

Alcoholics Anonymous Northern Illinois Area, Ltd.

Elgin - South Elgin - Carpentersville - East Dundee - West Dundee - Hampshire - Gilberts



# Twelve Tips on Keeping Your Holiday Season Sober and Joyous

Holiday parties without liquid spirits may still seem a dreary prospect to new A.A.s. But many of us have enjoyed the happiest holidays of our lives sober—an idea we would never have dreamed of, wanted, or believed possible when drinking.

**\*Here are some tips on having an all-round ball without a drop of alcohol.\***



**1. Line up extra A.A. activities for the holiday season.**

Arrange to take newcomers to meetings, answer the phones at a clubhouse or central office, speak, help with dishes, or visit the alcoholic ward at a hospital.

**2. Be host to A.A. friends, especially newcomers.**

If you don't have a place where you can throw a formal party, take one person to a diner and spring for the coffee.

**3. Keep your A.A. telephone list with you all the time.**

If a drinking urge or panic comes—postpone everything else until you've called an A.A.

**5. Skip any drinking occasion you are nervous about.**

Remember how clever you

were at excuses when drinking? Now put the talent to good use. No office party is as important as saving your life.

**6. If you have to go to a drinking party and can't take an A.A. with you, keep some candy handy.**

**7. Don't think you have to stay late.** Plan in advance an "important date" you have to keep. **8. Worship in your own way.** **9. Don't sit around brooding.** Catch up on those books, museums, walks, and letters. **10. Don't start now getting worked up about all those holiday temptations.**

Remember—"one day at a time."



**11. Enjoy the true beauty of holiday love and joy.** Maybe you cannot give material gifts — but this year, you can give love.

**12. "Having had a . . ."** No need to spell out the Twelfth Step here, since you already know it.

