Emotional Sobriety

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American Dental Association
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Disclaimer

• These are not my original ideas, just my observations.

• They have been collected through personal experience, attending meetings, classes that I have taken and books that I have read.

• Passed on to me by many different mentors that I have had throughout my life.
October 21, 1998
A NEW PRESCRIPTION FOR PAIN

Flipping the Script on the Worst Public Health Crisis the Nation Has Ever Seen
Flipping the Script on the War Crisis the Nation Has
Austin Eubanks

October 7, 1981 - May 18, 2019

Columbine Shooting Survivor Austin Eubanks Died of Accidental Heroin Overdose: Coroner

Austin Eubanks, who spoke candidly about his opioid addiction after surviving the 1999 Columbine High School shooting, died of an accidental...

1 month ago

Columbine shooting survivor Austin Eubanks died of heroin overdose, coroner confirms

Eubanks was found dead in his home May 18. The coroner had previously confirmed that he died overnight, and no signs of foul play were...

1 month ago

Columbine survivor and addiction recovery speaker Austin Eubanks died of heroin overdose, autopsy shows

Columbine survivor and addiction recovery advocate Austin Eubanks died of a heroin overdose last month, an autopsy report from the Routt...

1 month ago
Here’s mine...

WHAT IS YOUR TRAUMA?
Sometimes they aren’t serving us anymore,

COPING MECHANISMS
THEY WORK! UNTIL THEY DON’T...
• “It is easy to let up on the spiritual program of action and rest on our laurels. We are headed for trouble if we do, for alcohol is a subtle foe. We are not cured of our alcoholism.”
Drug Rehab 1997
Sober 1998 - 12 step groups AA, CA, Alanon
Peer Assistance Contract 2000-2003
Therapy 2018
Couple’s therapy 2019

TREATMENT (ONGOING)
ONE OF MY BEST DAYS
If we don’t do the work, our sobriety will always be on shaky ground

IS SOBRIETY ENOUGH?
Emotional Sobriety

• This is the substance of a revealing letter which Bill Wilson wrote several years ago to a close friend who also had troubles with depression. The letter appeared in the "Grapevine" January, 1958.
Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions

Three Questions: Pg 88 (Step 10)

1. Can we stay sober?

2. Can we keep in emotional balance?

3. Can we live to good purpose in all conditions?
Defintion – George Joseph

• “Physical Sobriety is the easy part. Anyone can quit a thousand times, but only the fortunate can quit for good.”

• “Emotional sobriety is not automatically rendered with physical sobriety. ES can be defined as resiliency, wisdom and balance.”

• “It is a metaphor for addicts who develop emotional intelligence through the course of their journeys.”
Resiliency

• Comes with time, practice and guidance
  – Sponsorship, step-work, meetings, etc.

  – *How do you get to be an old-timer? Don’t drink and don’t die.*

  – *Fall down 8 times get up 9!*
• Addiction and brain development

• On and off switches
  – Pleasure center
  – Rationality center
Resiliency

• Meditation

  – Enhances the neocortex’s ability to rise above the instinctual “program”
    – *Instinct not mentioned in BB, 37 times in 12x12*

  – This type of work allows us to respond rather than react.
Wisdom

• It takes years for our brain to change or normalize.

• Especially if we started using/abusing substances at a young age.

• But new pathways can form in 90 days!
  • (90/90)
Wisdom

• Wisdom can only come from experience

• Knowledge vs. Experience
  – Bill’s Story,
  – Fred’s Story – mentioned 2x

• “You can always tell an addict, but you can’t tell them anything...”
Balance

• Take time out from your “busy-ness” to build personal renewal of the physical, mental, social/emotional and spiritual dimensions.
Emotional Balance
Pankey Cross (Aristotle)

Love

Work  Happiness  Play

Worship
For me...This one has never been perfected!

BALANCE
Experience

• My normal -
  – Step 10, 11, 12 (escalator analogy)

• Meetings – Why I go.

• My eleventh year....
  • pg 79/80 in 12x12
Step 1

• “We admitted we were powerless over alcohol- that our lives had become unmanageable”
A New Step 1

• “Then comes the final agony of seeing how awfully wrong we have been, but still unable to get off the emotional merry-go-round.”
  – Bill Wilson (Paragraph 3, Letter on Emotional Sobriety)
“Yet these instincts, so powerful for our existence, often far exceed their proper functions. Powerfully, blindly, many times subtly, the drive us, dominate us, and insist upon ruling our lives”  Pg 42, 12x12
Fred’s Story

• “Quite as important was the discovery that spiritual principles would solve all my problems.” pg 42 BB

• “I have been brought into a way of living infinitely more satisfying and, I hope, more useful than the life I lived before.” pg 43
Bedevilments Pg 52 (Big Book)

• “We were having trouble with our personal relationships
• We couldn’t control our emotional natures
• We were prey to misery and depression
• We couldn’t make a living
• We had a feeling of uselessness
• We were full of fear
• We were unhappy
• We couldn’t seem to be of real help to other people”
Bedevilments

• “When we saw others solve their problems by a simple reliance upon the Spirit of the Universe, we had to stop doubting the power of God. Our ideas did not work, but the God idea did.”
### ONLY 31 PAGES LATER THE BEDEVILMENTS ARE REPLACED BY THE PROMISES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THE BEDEVILMENTS (page 52)</th>
<th>THE PROMISES (page 83)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We were having trouble with personal relationships.</td>
<td>We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows. Self-seeking will slip away.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We couldn't control our emotional natures.</td>
<td>We will comprehend the word serenity and we know peace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We were a prey to misery and depression.</td>
<td>Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We couldn't make a living.</td>
<td>Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We had a feeling of uselessness.</td>
<td>That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We were full of fear.</td>
<td>We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We were unhappy.</td>
<td>We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We couldn't seem to be of real help to other people.</td>
<td>No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how your experience can benefit others. We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And, most of all,</td>
<td>We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.</td>
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[ http://www.thejaywalker.com ]
got purpose?
Spiritual life

• “For if an alcoholic failed to perfect and enlarge his spiritual life through work and self-sacrifice for others, he could not survive the certain trials and low spots ahead. If he did not work, he would surely drink again, and if he drank, he would surely die. Then faith would be dead indeed. With us it is just like that.”

• pg 14 BB
Find life’s purpose through the work.
We all have been given gifts unique to each of us. These gifts are God-given. We must grow these gifts, and share them with the world.
TIME DOES NOT GUARANTEE EMOTIONAL SOBRIETY

Bill Wilson
Emotional Intelligence

• Definition:
  – The ability to use, understand, and manage emotions in positive ways to relieve stress, communicate effectively, empathize with others, overcome challenges and diffuse conflict.
Emotional Intelligence

• If you have a high EQ, you are able to recognize your own emotional state, and the emotional state of others and engage with people in a way that draws them to you.
Emotional Intelligence

- Relate better to others
- Form healthier relationships
- Achieve greater success at work
- More fulfilling life
Four Components of Emotional Intelligence (Goleman)

• Personal Competence
  1. Self Awareness (steps 4, 5, 10, 11)
  2. Managing emotions (3, 6, 7, 10, 11)

• Social Competence
  3. Empathy (Steps 8, 9, 10, 12)
  4. Social Skill (Steps 8, 9, 10, 12)
Behaviors

• Instinctual – innate, reflexive, primitive (limbic)
  – Will it kill me? Can I mate with it? Can I eat it?

• Learned – Environmental, Repetition, Modeling (family, upbringing)
  – Enlists higher brain function (Neo Cortex)
• Most decisions are based on emotion
  – I want it, it makes me happy

• Justified by logic
Truth

• Know yourself – If you stand for nothing, you will fall for anything

  – What do you stand for? (Core Values)
  – How committed are you? (Integrity)
    – Whatever we focus on grows!
WHAT ARE YOU THINKING?
Self Awareness Questions

• What is my intuition telling me?
  – Angry
  – Fear
  – Excitement
  – Love

• Is it true?  (Ask - Why? Answer – So what?)
Emotional Self Management

• Key point - you can’t control the thoughts/emotions pop into your brain...you can control what you do with them.

• Emotions originate in the primitive brain
  – So does addiction!

• Must access the prefrontal cortex to over-ride the primitive brain. (Steps 4,5,6,7,10,11)
Empathy

• The capacity to recognize feelings that are being experienced by another sentient being

• Covey Habit 5—Seek first to understand, then to be understood.
  • Ask genuine questions – listen, observe body language
Social Skills

• Managing relationships

• We judge ourselves by our intentions, while we judge others by their actions
  • Resonance
  • Dissonance
Dissonance

• Can we be productive while in dissonance?
  – Lower EQ - no
  – Higher EQ - yes

• Challenges the norm, expands perspective
Playing with others

• Limbic Lock - mirror neurons
  – Can lead you down a path of regret (drama)
  – Can lead you down a path of peace (no drama)

• Level of emotional **ATTACHMENT** to the issue will determine the amount of drama
How attached are you to....?
How do you diffuse limbic lock?
Self Awareness Questions

• What is my intuition telling me?
  – Angry
  – Fear
  – Excitement
  – Love

• Is it true? (Ask - Why? Answer – So what?)
Key point

• When dealing with addiction – we are dealing with insanity.

• You cannot fight insanity with logic
  – “Moral psychology”
  – “Experience a complete psychic change”

  – Read ES Letter
People will stop asking you questions if you answer back in interpretive dance.
Sponsorship/Mentorship

• Ego says, “You should know better. Don’t bother anyone with these problems”

  – Dangerous!

  – Restless Irritable, discontent.

  – Instructions for sponsorship is all over the 12x12 and not anywhere in the Big Book
Can’t fix my broken brain with my broken brain!

We need to ask for help
What I do

- Meetings
- Sponsor/Sponsees
- Morning prayer, meditation (Headspace, Calm)
- Mission Statement, Affirmations
- Journal (morning, evening 5 minute Journal)
- Exercise (core, cardio)
- Practice 10, 11
  - When it doesn’t seem to be working, time for more step work or outside help.
When all else fails...

Work with another alcoholic
Dependence

• “Some of us held on to our old ideas and the result was nil until we let go absolutely.”

• “We stood at the turning point. We asked for his protection and care with complete abandon”
“I’ve been given a quiet spot in bright sunshine” Bill W.
Bibliography

- Alcoholics Anonymous, 12 Steps and 12 Traditions
- Alan Berger
  - 12 Smart Things
- Daniel Goleman
  - Emotional Intelligence
  - Primal Leadership
- Stephen Covey
  - 7 Habits of Highly Effective People
Discussion

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