
ALTERNATIVE

"INTERGROUP NEWSLETTER FOR THE READING AREA" April 1998

DEALING WITH RESENTMENTS

Resentment is the Number One offender. It destroys more alcoholics than anything else. From it stem all forms of spiritual disease, for we have been not only mentally and physically ill, we have also been spiritually ill. When our spiritual malady is overcome, we straighten out mentally and physically.

In dealing with our resentments, we set them on paper. We listed people, institutions, or principles with whom we were angry. We asked ourselves why we were angry. In most cases it was found that our self-esteem, our pocketbooks, our ambitions, our personal relationships (including sex) were hurt or threatened.

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The most heated bit of letter-writing can be a wonderful safety valve - providing the wastebasket is somewhere nearby.

(As Bill Sees It p.39)

The Essence of A.A.: H. A. L. T. !

As adjuncts to A.A.'s spiritual program and meetings, there are cliches, systems, gimmicks and a myriad of other tricks that have been used by A.A. members down through the years to maintain sobriety. I, for one, strongly uphold the application of the foremost of these, the "Rule of HALT," not only for the new member, but for the old-timer as well. Further, I sincerely feel this simple rule to be too often ignored or passed over lightly.

In the beginning, new members, as we all know, are usually confused and completely without direction. Some are sincere to the very bottom of their souls, while others are only lukewarm in their desire to "put the plug in the jug." Both sorts look to us for answers, explaining *how*, and all too often they are disappointed. (This is understandable, for how many of us know *how* A.A. works?)

We have precious little to give our "babies" save encouragement, fellowship, and living proof that the program works – at least for us. Why not, then, pass on whatever practical information and instruction we can to each newcomer, to make his beginning more palatable and to enhance his chances of success should he choose to follow these instructions?

We are certain that most members of A.A. are aware of the "Rule of HALT," but to what degree we cannot be certain. To scrutinize the rule briefly may be helpful to the reader and will certainly be so to the writer, who has proved in reality that violation of it in part or *in toto* can, and often does, lead to relapse. Here, then, is the meat of the rule:

H DON'T GET TOO HUNGRY. For a reason we cannot explain, there seems to be in the alcoholic a peculiar psychophysical relationship between hunger and the urge to drink. On some occasions, we would eat a big dinner and then find it had literally destroyed our desire to drink afterwards. Conversely, and eventually more often, we avoided eating because we knew it would interfere with our drinking. Years ago, my sponsor told me that if I had a physical urge to take a drink, I should go out of my way to drink a milk shake. If this didn't work, he said I should drink another. And another. I can testify that if you drink liquor on top of two or three milk shakes, you are not an alcoholic. You're nuts! And so, when you are hungry, eat. Simple and important.

A DON'T GET TOO ANGRY. Wow! Of all things to tell an alcoholic. But we don't have to be on the program very long to realize that anger, righteous or not, is better left to those who can handle it. Borrowing from Father John Doe: "Let the other guy get mad! If somebody calls me an SOB, either I am or I ain't. If I am, so what? And if I ain't, why should I make myself one by getting mad about it?" We can't afford to get angry – especially at people. Kick the wall or the TV if you will, but "Let the other guy get mad!" We know too well where anger leads: to resentment! And brother, do we know what resentment brings! Rule of thumb? Well, as the young folks say in this age, "Cool it, baby. Cool it."

L DON'T GET TOO LONELY. Nonalcoholic members of the psychiatric profession tend to equate loneliness with boredom, and we are inclined to agree. If there is one thing that must be included in the alcoholic's life before he can once again become whole, it is worthwhile activity. This may be Twelfth Step work, his vocation, his avocation, or anything else. But we feel such activity must be present in order to fulfill his existence and eliminate loneliness. We must also consider the loneliness brought about because the newcomer lives alone. But this is easily rectified. It takes only a phone call or a visit to an A.A.-oriented club. Or, for the A.A. loner, far from other members, the Big Book or a letter to an A.A. pen pal may suffice. Under any consideration, loneliness is the mother of self-pity, and the ultimate end is resentment and drinking. The rule of thumb? DO SOMETHING!

T DON'T GET TOO TIRED. In its effect, the last ingredient or direction in our rule is not too different from the first. Physical fatigue will affect both our bodies and our minds adversely and will thereby lower our defenses against the urge to drink if there is any possibility at all of such a desire being present, consciously or subconsciously. And here the rule of thumb is: "When you get tired, put the body down!" (How many times have we read and said EASY DOES IT!)

So there it is: HALT – Hungry, Angry, Lonely, Tired. This rule, when coupled with meetings and living our day-by-day lives according to A.A. principles, will make things much easier, not only for the newcomer, but for the old-timer as well. Once we recognize that these four conditions are dangerous if succumbed to, we should avoid them as carefully as we would that first drink – for any one of them could be the first step to a drunk.

-Dr. John, San Diego, Calif., Grapevine, February 1971

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NEW MEETING SCHEDULES will be available at the next Intergroup Meeting Tuesday, April 28, at 7:30 p.m., in the Flame Room of the UGI Building.

7th ANNIVERSARY OF HILLTOP GROUP Tuesday, April 14, at 7:30 p.m. Join us for the Speaker, and coffee and cake after the meeting. For further information call Keith W. at 736-9236.

Intergroup is seeking a Liaison for the Men's Prison to replace Steve S., whose 2-year term has expired. Please call him at 678-0644 or attend our next Intergroup meeting.

+++INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENTS FOR APRIL+++

**WERNERSVILLE HOSPITAL
Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m.**

**CHIT CHAT FARMS
Thursdays at 8:00 p.m.**

**7 - Recovery Riders
14 - Leesport
21 - ALPHA
28 - Time To Start Living**

**2 - ALPHA
9 - Recovery Riders
16- Walnut St. Recovery
22 - Recovery Riders
30 - Hilltop**

(If you cannot meet your commitment, please arrange for a back-up or call Stan S. at 375-1441)

*"Everybody can be great ... because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace, a soul generated by love."
(Martin Luther King, Jr.)*

+ INTERGROUP COUNTS ON YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS +

MANY THANKS FOR CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED FROM THE FOLLOWING DURING THE PAST MONTH: Alpha; 24-Hour-A-Day; Come As You Are; Leesport; Oley; Skylight Room; Tomalo Con Calma; Walnut St. Recovery.

ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND INTERGROUP AND DISTRICT MEETINGS. SEE YOUR MEETING SCHEDULE OR GSR FOR TIME AND PLACE.

Chairperson:	Bob B.	376-6007	Alternate Chair:	Irish G.	670-5066
Secretary:	Rick F.	372-9240	Treasurer:	Harry S.	562-0924
Hotline:	Carolyn G.	929-0598	Schedules:	Irish G.	670-5066
Alternative:	Mary R.	478-8442	Books & Lit.	Bob B.	376-6007
Women's Prison:	Chris H.	371-0102	Men's Prison:	Steve S.	678-0644
Archives:	Harry S.	562-0924	Institutions:	Stan S.	375-1411
Unity:	Scott D.	921-2789	Spanish Liaison:	Angel R.	372-2438
District Liaison:	Michael I.	926-4753			

