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24 hours a day april 6

Daily Reflections April 6 A LIFETIME PROCESS We were having trouble with personal relationships, we couldn't control our emotional natures, we were a 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. . . . - ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, p. 52 These words remind me that I have more problems than alcohol, that alcohol is only a symptom of a more pervasive disease. When I stopped drinking I began a lifetime process of recovery from unruly emotions, painful relationships, and unmanageable situations. This process is too much for most of us without help from a Higher Power and our friends in the Fellowship. When I began working the Steps of the A.A. program, many of these tangled threads unraveled but, little by little, the most broken places of my life straightened out. One day at a time, almost imperceptibly, I healed. Like a thermostat being turned down, my fears diminished. I began to experience moments of contentment. My emotions became less volatile. I am now once again a part of the human family. ***** Twenty-Four Hours A Day April 6 A.A. Thought For The Day All alcoholics have personality problems. They drink to escape from life, to counteract feelings of loneliness or inferiority, or because of some emotional conflict within them, so that they cannot adjust themselves to life. Alcoholics cannot stop drinking unless they find a way to solve their personality problems. That's why going on the wagon doesn't solve anything. That's why taking the pledge usually doesn't work. Was my personality problem ever solved by going on the wagon or taking the pledge? Meditation For The Day God irradiates your life with the warmth of His spirit. You must open up like a flower to this divine irradiation. Loosen your hold on earth, its cares, and its worries. Unclasp your hold on material things, relax your grip, and the tide of peace and serenity will flow in. Relinquish every material thing and receive it back again from God. Do not hold on to earth's treasures so firmly that your hands are too occupied to clasp God's hands as He holds them out to you in love. Prayer For The Day I pray that I may be open to receive God's blessing. I pray that I may be willing to relinquish my hold on material things and receive them back from God. ***** As Bill Sees It April 6 When Defects Are Less Than Deadly, p. 96 Practically everybody wishes to be rid of his most glaring and destructive handicaps. No one wants to be so proud that he is scorned as a braggart, nor so greedy that he is labeled a thief. No one wants to be angry enough to murder, lustful enough to rape, gluttonous enough to ruin his health. No one wants to be agonized by chronic envy or paralyzed by sloth. Of course, most human beings don't suffer these defects at these rock-bottom levels, and we who have escaped such extremes are apt to congratulate ourselves. Yet can we? After all, hasn't it been self-interest that has enabled most of us to escape? Not much spiritual effort is involved in avoiding excesses which will bring us punishment anyway. But when we face up to the less violent aspects of these very same defects, where do we stand then? 12 & 12, p. 66 ***** Walk in Dry Places April 6 The Barrier of Sick Pride Sharing Feelings Pride can be either sick or healthy. It's sick pride that keeps us in bondage to alcohol. It's healthy pride that emerges when we have high self-esteem. Finding the right path in sobriety always involves a battle to keep sick pride out of our lives. What if I'm at a discussion meeting and I feel reluctant to admit that certain character defects are still giving me trouble? Can this be sick pride carrying on the pretense that I have risen above such problems? What if someone takes issue with a point I've tried to make in a discussion? Does sick pride cause me to react in self-defense? We learn in the 12 Step program that we gain nothing by attempting to conceal our character defects from our fellow members. We gain everything by sharing our true feelings and letting others know we are vulnerable human beings. There is never any need to defend or explain anything we've tried to say in a meeting. The real message always comes through in our attitude, and it will reach those for whom it's intended. I'll check myself today to see if sick pride is dictating what I say and do. The more I can let others see me as I really am, the more honest my relationships will be. ***** Keep It Simple April 6 To know the road ahead, ask those coming back. -Chinese proverb We're going down a new road--in our recovery and in our lives. We don't know the road. We only know we're on the right one, because our Higher Power led us here. We ask for help from those who already know the road. We ask our sponsor, "How far is it until I get done feeling guilty?" "How far to self-love?" "How humpy is the road when I'm at Step Four?" We need people who have been in the program. They tell us where to slow down because this part of the trip is beautiful. Someday, maybe today, we too will be called on to guide others. Prayer for the Day: Higher Power, You've put me on this road. You've also put others on this road. Let them be my guide. Let my guides become my friends. Action for the Day: Today, I'll find someone who has been in the program two or more years longer than me. I'll ask that person what the road ahead is like. ***** Each Day a New Beginning April 6 Treat your friends as you do your pictures, and place them in their best light. -Jennie Jerome Churchill Taking our friends and loved ones for granted, expecting perfection from them in every instance, greatly lessens the value we have in one another's life. Being hard on those closest to us may relieve some of our own imperfections, but it creates another tension, one that may result in our friends leaving us behind. We need the reminder, perhaps, that our friends are special to our growth. Our paths have crossed with reason. We complete a portion of the plan for one another's life. And for such gifts we need to offer gratitude. Each of us is endowed with many qualities, some more enhancing than others; it is our hope, surely, that our lesser qualities will be ignored. We must do likewise for our friends. We can focus on the good, and it will flourish-in them, in ourselves, in all situations. A positive attitude nurtures everyone. Let us look for the good and, in time, it is all that will catch our attention. I can make this day one to remember with fondness. I will appreciate a friend. I will let her know she matters in my life. Her life will be enhanced by my attention. ***** Alcoholics Anonymous April 6 LISTENING TO THE WIND - It took an "angel" to introduce this Native American woman to A.A. and recovery. I started drinking when I was around eleven years old. I stayed with my brother and his wife just outside of Gallup, New Mexico. We were poor. The smell of beans and fresh tortillas symbolized home to me. I slept in a bed with three other children, where we huddled close to keep warm in the freezing weather. The snow was deep around us. p. 458 ***** Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions April 6 Step Four - "Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves." Creation gave us instincts for a purpose. Without them we wouldn't be complete human beings. If men and women didn't exert themselves to be secure in their persons, made no effort to harvest food or construct shelter, there would be no survival. If they didn't reproduce, the earth wouldn't be populated. If there were no social instinct, if men cared nothing for the society of one another, there would be no society. So these desires--for the sex relation, for material and emotional security, and for companionship--are perfectly necessary and right, and surely God-given. p. 42 ***** Xtra Thoughts April 6 God, help me to let go of my need to control and to be open to the flow of the universe. -Melody Beattie It becomes a hard life when we pray to God for all sorts of help but we won't be quiet, sit back, and listen for the answers God provides. Don't dominate the conversation: Be silent and listen a little. In other words, meditate. Quiet down and observe your life. -John-Roger Positive mental energy, positive thinking, does not mean we think unrealistically or revert to denial. If we don't like something, we respect our own opinion. If we spot a problem, we're honest about it. If something isn't working out, we accept reality. But we don't dwell on the negative parts of our experience. Whatever we give energy to, we empower. -Melody Beattie "Notice the acts of kindness other people do rather than their wrongdoing. This is how the loving presence views you. We are all good, decent, loving souls who occasionally get lost." -Wayne Dyer "When things go wrong, don't go with them." -Anon. "It wasn't raining when Noah built the ark." -Howard Ruff We can trust God for daily protection. -John D. Byers ***** Father Leo's Daily Meditation April 6 PRIDE "Though pride is not a virtue, it is the parent of many virtues." -M. C. Collins I need to remember that "pride" is not necessarily a negative. It is sensible to have a balanced pride in my sobriety because self-esteem will grow from the pride and respect I give to myself. God has made me and is involved with me and, therefore, I am a beautiful person. Balanced pride helps me with my appearance, grooming and personal etiquette that comes with clothes, fashion and hairstyles. Pride helps me with my communication skills - I work hard at being understood, speaking out clearly and developing better methods of being understood. Pride stops me from being taken advantage of, enabling me to say "no" to others while still feeling good about myself. A healthy sense of pride is essential for spiritual growth. Lord, let me have a realistic appreciation of myself that leads to achievement. ***** Bible Scriptures April 6 "For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endures to all generations." -Psalms 100:5 "If you seek me with all your heart, I will let you find me." -Jeremiah 29:13-14 I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust." -Psalm 91:2 ***** Daily Inspiration April 6 Don't think less of yourself than God thinks of you. He has created us with worth and value beyond our comprehension. Lord, help me to live daily knowing that I am very valuable and do make a difference. The choices we make will affect our lives for better or for worse. Lord, You have given me all that I need to make wise choices. May I always take time to listen to You. ***** A Day At A Time April 6 Reflection For The Day What do we say to a person who has slipped, or one who calls for help? WE can carry the message, if they're willing to listen; we can share our experience, strength and hope. Perhaps the most important thing we can do, however, is to tell the person that we love him or her, that we're truly happy he or she is back, and that we want to help all we can. And we must mean it. Can I still "go to school" and continue to learn from the mistakes and adversities of others? Today I Pray May I always have enough love to welcome back to the group someone who has slipped. May I listen to that person's story-of-woe, humbly. For there, but for my Higher Power, go I, May I learn from others' mistakes and pray that I will not re-enact them. Today I Will Remember Sobriety is never fail-safe. ***** One More Day April 6 The man who makes no mistakes does not usually make anything. - Edward John Phelps We feel so vulnerable when we have a chronic illness, almost as though we are specimens, displayed as oddities. Because of our vulnerable feelings, we may be reluctant to undertake new experiences out of fear that we may expose ourselves to ridicule. Yet, actually, few people take the time or trouble to stare. Living a sequestered life and taking no chances is not the answer. There are always options available to us, but they may be different options from those we previously considered. We can decide to take new directions. The image we show to others is a reflection of the image we carry within. Trying to reach past my mistakes into new successes enhances my life. ***** One Day At A Time April 6 - Courage - It takes a lot of courage to show your dreams to someone else. -Erma Bombeck I remember first starting my Twelve Step program. I had lots of expectations and dreams, but I couldn't talk to anyone about them. I thought my dreams were stupid and that nobody there really cared about who I was or what I wanted to achieve. This is a big problem with all of us compulsive overeaters. We all have hopes and dreams of losing our impulse to eat all the time, and of losing our excess weight. Thinking we're not worth anyone's time keeps us strong in our addiction. As we work through the Steps and learn to trust our new family of choice, we get the courage to begin to open up and share our dreams and hopes. We all find our hidden courage by praying and trusting our Higher Power. We find the courage to tell people about ourselves and trust that nobody will put us down for our past or for the future we dream of achieving. Our dreams have no time limit; they don't have to happen immediately. They may happen immediately, or it may take a long time of struggling, but as long as we have hope and courage, they will become a reality in Higher Power's time. One Day at a Time ... I remember that we learn that, together, things become much easier. As we share our experience, strength and dreams with others, they will help us learn how we can work with a special program and plan. With Higher Power and our recovery friends, our courage grows stronger, and we find we can and will succeed. - Jeannette - ***** Elder's Meditation of the Day - April 6 "Everybody should pray together, cheer along, root along. That brings the circle together. Everything is together." -Wallace Black Elk, LAKOTA Life on the Earth can sometimes be very complicated. Sometimes we think we are alone in our problems. Sometime we even withdraw. Then the problems become even more difficult. We need to watch out for one another, to care for one another, to pray together, to encourage one another; and we need to support one another. Behaving in this manner will bring the circle together. Great Spirit, today, let me support my brothers and sisters. ***** Journey To The Heart April 6 Be Present for Yourself Learn to be present for yourself, fully present in a way that's new and delightful. Be present for your thoughts and emotions. Be present for the gentle way in which your heart and body lead you on. Learn to be fully present for each step of your growth, each step of your journey. Value yourself, who you are, what you think and feel, and how you grow. For many years you neglected yourself. It was as though you were unconscious of who you were, how you felt, what you believed. You believed that kept you safe, protected you from feelings you didn't want to feel. You believed it was how you should live. Now you are learning another way. Survival is no longer enough. It does not meet the needs of your heart and your soul. Now you want to live fully and joyfully. To do that, you must be present for yourself. Be fully present for others, too. Be present for their spirits, their emotions, the words they have to say to you, but especially be present for their hearts. You no longer have to fear losing or neglecting yourself if you are present for others. You can do this safely now. You will not be consumed by their needs, you will not become trapped in the workings of their lives. And if you're present for yourself, you'll know how much presence to give others. Be present for life- for the starlit skies and the chirping birds that sing in the morning sun. Be present for the earth and grass under your feet, for the feel of a snowflake in your hand. Be present for all the magic and mysteries of the universe. But most of all, be present for yourself. Then your presence for others and life will naturally follow. ***** Today's Gift April 6 In quarreling about the shadow, we often lose the substance. -Aesop There is a fable about a man and his camel who were hired by a wealthy man to get him across the desert. The journey was so hot that they stopped to rest one day, and the only shade to be found was in the shadow of the camel. The two of them began to argue about who had the rights to the camel's shadow--the owner or the renter. They were so involved in their argument that the camel ran away and they didn't notice until it was long gone. Sometimes we get so caught up in being right that we become like these two, fighting over a shadow. Instead of paying attention to our journey and sharing what we have, we let ourselves get distracted. It is more important to notice what we have, to share it as best we can, and continue our journey. What can I share with another today? ***** The Language of Letting Go April 6 Patience How sick and tired we may become of people telling us to be patient or to learn patience. How frustrating it can be to wait to finally have something, or to move forward, and then not have that happen. How irritating to have someone tell us to wait while our needs have not been met and were in the midst of anxiety, frustration, and inaction. Do not confuse the suggestion to be patient with the old rule about not having feelings. Being patient does not mean we go through the sometimes-grueling process of life and recovery without having feelings! Feel the frustration. Feel the impatience. Get as angry as you need to about not having your needs met. Feel your fear. Controlling our feelings will not control the process! We find patience by surrendering to our feelings. Patience cannot be forced. It is a gift, one that closely follows acceptance and gratitude. When we work through our feelings to fully accept who we are and what we have, we will be ready to be and have more. Today, I will let myself have my feelings while I practice patience. ***** More Language Of Letting Go April 6 The power of thoughts In 1922, Egypt hailed the discovery of King Tut's tomb by archaeologist Harold Carter. On the walls of the tomb, the magicians had scrawled that a severe punishment would befall anyone disturbing the contents of the burial site. Over the next ten years, more than twenty people involved with the excavation died suddenly or mysteriously. Whether you call it a curse or a hypnotic suggestion of sorts, what we're talking about is the tremendous impact that suggestions have on us. We're talking about the power of belief. Many of us spend thousands of dollars in therapy and years of our lifetime disentangling our thoughts from the beliefs of our parents, beliefs that were passed on to them by their parents, and their grandparents, and even further on down the ancestral line. Sometimes, the effects of other people's thoughts are less blatant, and even more controlling. We can react instinctively to the silent demands of a spouse or lover, or a boss. They smile or frown-- or just look at us-- and we know what they mean and expect. Sometimes a casual comment by a friend can send us into a tailspin when he or she suggests, You can't do that; it won't work. Do it this way. Months later, when the way we're trying to do it isn't working out and we still keep trying and wonder why, we look back and say, "Oh, My friend told me to do it this way. Maybe he was wrong." An important part of living in harmony with others means we enjoy doing things that please them, and we don't unnecessarily or maliciously hurt those with whom we interact. An important part of being true to ourselves means checking ourselves from time to time to see if the things we're doing are really what we want, or if we're just a puppet and someone else is pulling our strings. God, help me respect the power of belief. Activity: Try a little experiment to prove to yourself how strong the mind is. Walk up to two people, whether you know them or not. Think something very positive and loving about them, but don't say these thoughts out loud. ***** Touchstones Meditations For Men April 6 I had gone through life thinking I was better than everyone else and at the same time, being afraid of everyone. I was afraid to be me. - Dennis Wholey Looking back to the codependent or addictive times in our lives, we see with the perfect vision of hindsight. It is both embarrassing and humorous to see how misguided and deluded we were then. Grandiose images of ourselves isolated us from those around us and cut us off from true friendships with others. Many of us had strong feelings about ourselves that were in conflict - we felt both special and unworthy. In this program we grow over time to have a more realistic self-concept. We are not exactly like everyone else, but we are more like them than different. It's okay to be like others, and it's comforting, too. Accepting this, we grow fully into the whole men we were meant to be, and we relish the joy of friendship. May I accept the guidance of my Higher Power in developing a realistic and comfortable self-image. ***** Daily TAO April 6 CONSTANCY Clear sunlight on falling snow; fire and ice. Bare-boned trees stark to the horizon, Cold marshes, havens to ducks and geese. A groundhog sits motionless on a post. Wherever we are, the constant flow of Tao is ever present. We see the cycle of opposites, such as the juxtaposition of sunlight and snow. We notice the ongoing rhythms of life : waterfowl carrying on their lives even as spring is slow to warm and leafless trees stand in anticipation of warmer weather. All things change, all things move constantly. The world is like the ongoing turning of a magnificent wheel. All things come in their own time. Just as a groundhog sits motionless in the moving of the seasons, so too should we look within and slowly absorb the time. Within all the movement, the groundhog takes time to be still. Within all the changing of spring, we must take time to notice the constancy of inner devotion. No matter how much is going on outside of oneself, one still reaffirms what is in one's heart, taking comfort in the regular pulse. What works in the shelter of home or temple works everywhere. Only when we know such constancy will be know that our quest is succeeding. ***** Daily Zen April 6 To remove oneself from all outer form is called "meditation." To be perfectly interiorized and still is called "samadhi."

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