



Pine Grove

Alumni Program

Forrest Health®

Fall Issue
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Forgiveness

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Why do we hear so much about making amends, forgiveness, or keeping our side of the street clean in recovery? We've all heard the phrase, "Resentments lead to relapse." The [*Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous*](#) says resentment destroys more alcoholics than anything else because deep resentment leads to futility and unhappiness and shuts us off from the, "Sunlight of the spirit." Bill Wilson maintained that forgiveness is necessary for sobriety. He called it, "Letting go of resentments."

Greater Good Science Center Magazine reports, "Psychologists generally define forgiveness as a conscious, deliberate decision to release feelings of resentment or vengeance toward a person or group who has harmed you, regardless of whether they actually deserve your forgiveness. Forgiveness does not mean forgetting, nor does it mean

condoning or excusing offenses." It does, however, allow addicts and alcoholics to live and love again.

I think it is safe to say that all of us, alcoholic/addict or not, have carried resentments. It is likely a minority that has not used in response to resentment. The majority of us do respond to resentments by using. In doing so, we put ourselves at risk of being in bondage to a person or institution or our circumstances that has hurt us. More importantly, we are in bondage to our disease. We can actually become slaves to our resentment(s): anger, fear, distrust, abandonment, bullying, and the list goes on.

Before you lose heart, in recovery we have found an antidote that gives us life-breathing freedom from our resentments. The 12 Steps are our antidote to ridding our lives, our side of the street of resentments.

Step 4 allows us to take a searching and fearless inventory of our resentments, one by one, and to identify the part we played in each of them. When I worked my first Step 4 in 1994, I was so deeply entrenched in the position of being a victim; I had immense difficulty seeing how I had anything to do with the things that happened to me. I spent my life reacting to things that happened around me rather than learning to make my own way. And I thought that was normal! As a result, it took me years and a few relapses, to unravel my thought processes enough to actually see that I had choices; even when I believed I didn't and had been victimized once again. One of the most important things I learned in this process is that I am capable of making my own decisions. And, I am the only one who gets to choose how I will respond to situations and circumstances regardless of how they happen.

Steps 8 & 9 allow me to make amends to those I have harmed. This brings about even more freedom. One thing to remember is that we are making amends in order to reconcile our lives, not those to whom we make amends. Regardless of whether or not the recipient of my amends accepts it gracefully or not, I have to be able to forgive myself (*cont.*)

In recovery, we realize that we have paid a price, a tremendous price, for the privilege to, "Carry the message." What an honor!

– E. McRae

God's plan for your life far exceed the circumstances of your day.

– Unknown
Author



Mark Your Calendars

**Days of Hope
(Virtual)
December 4**

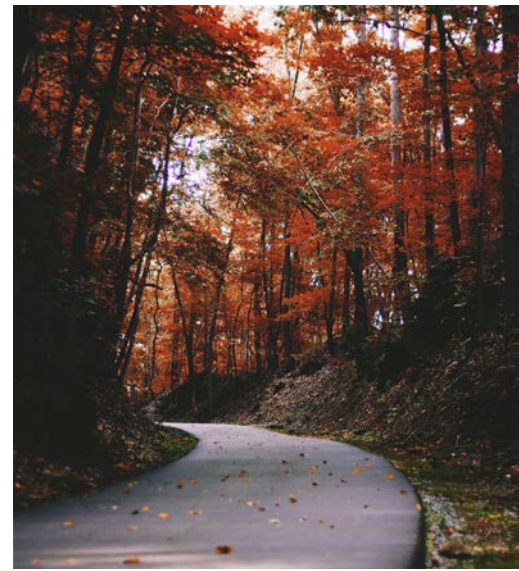


Forgiveness (cont.)

for my actions. Many of us have more trouble forgiving ourselves than we do forgiving others.

I was raised in what I refer to as, a shame-based environment. If one of us did something wrong, my mom would say, "You ought to be ashamed of yourself." I made up she was telling me that I was a bad person, undeserving of good things. I grew up believing I was never enough and didn't deserve forgiveness. I later realized this was definitely not my mother's intent. She passed on what she learned from her mother. At any rate, I had to learn as an adult that I have equal value to everyone else; no more value and no less, regardless of my behaviors or actions.

I am grateful today that I am a recovering alcoholic because growing through this process is one of the best things that ever happened to me. Had I not become an alcoholic, I would very likely still be that angry, bitter and resentful woman who blamed everyone else for what happened. Today, I live my life intentionally in a state of serenity and love. I do so because I now know how to keep my side of the street clean by letting go of my resentments, living in consultation with my higher power and others in recovery. And, I have learned how to forgive myself and others. ❤️



A Bit of *Gratitude* will Change Your *Attitude*

Erin Konves
Alumni Coordinator
Pine Grove Behavioral Health & Addiction Services

As I sit writing this article, I think of how the entire world has changed drastically in a short time. We have all been affected. And one way or another, we have learned different ways to cope with the ever changing lifestyles that we are now living. I have to admit that I did not prepare myself for the long term effects this pandemic was going to have on society. Change is inevitable ... for many this is a difficult process to embrace.

It is times like these I must find an attitude of gratitude. When I first embarked on a life of recovery, I had no clue what it meant to be truly grateful for anything or anyone. All I wanted to do was complain that my circumstances were a result of others, and I would argue with you that my life was the worst EVER, and if you asked me to do something - I would look at you like, "Don't you know who I am or where I come from?" I was someone special / unique....blah, blah, blah. If you have an addiction, I'm sure you'll relate.

I love recovery and all it has to offer, IF you're willing to work for it. My recovery journey began at Pine Grove's Women's Center. While I was there, my therapist suggested I write a gratitude list. Begrudgingly, I decided to do it. I had a small notepad which I purchased on one of the supervised outings. Each night before turning in, I would reflect over my day and write a brief sentence of gratitude. As time passed by I started to notice the writings became something I looked forward to, I slept better at night, and I felt refreshed in the morning. I even looked forward to days that I knew were going to be demanding. I was beginning to have a different perception of life.

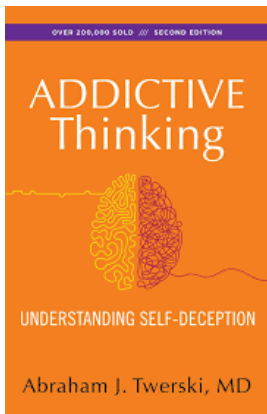
My journey led me to 12 step meetings. And after long, hard work with a sponsor and the 12 steps, having a few spiritual experiences, and taking

others through the steps, I realized that gratitude is so much more than writing a list. Gratitude is an action word. And by that I mean I cannot think my way into it, I must live it. Writing the gratitude list was the start to my process. However, if I wanted to obtain any growth in my recovery I was responsible for the action. This was going to be an on-going challenge to embrace.

I've worked diligently to rebuild relationships that were once broken. It takes effort on my part to keep these relationships restored. A phone call to say, "Hey" or sending a card on my friend's birthday, and being present during a dinner conversation with a family member are other ways. How many of you have made an effort to put the cart where it needs to go after shopping at the grocery store, or do we take for granted that the employees will, "Handle it?" Are we willing to put forth extra effort?

What about the tangible things we own? How do we care for them? I never knew that washing your vehicle or taking it to have the oil changed and tires rotated was a form of gratitude. It shows appreciation for having a car - a means of transportation - for without it, it would be very inconvenient for me to get to and from work each day, not to mention all the other events I attend throughout the week. I did not appreciate the items I worked hard to have in my life.

My life is worth so much to me; it is only by grace that I am here. When I take for granted the people, places, and things that I've been blessed with, I fall into the poor pitiful despair of anxiety and depression. This, for me, I know will lead to another drink, drug, or acting out behavior. I try each day to have an attitude of gratitude, for this can turn many events from anguish into hope and a life worth living. If you are struggling with gratitude in your recovery, may I suggest you try with a simple gratitude list? This is how it began for me, and then blossomed into something so much more.



Reading And Recovery:

Addictive Thinking: Understanding Self Deception

Author: Rabbi Abraham Twerski, M.D.

Quotes by Dr. Twerski
taken from this book:

“I cannot stress enough the importance of realizing that addicts and alcoholics are taken in by their own distorted thinking and that they are its victims.”

“The three most common elements in addictive thinking are (1) denial, (2) rationalization, and (3) projection.”



Eileene McRae
Alumni Coordinator,
Pine Grove
Behavioral Health

Do I really think like an addict/alcoholic? What does that mean? How could my thinking be different from that of a normal person? These are all valid questions and questions I pondered early in my own recovery. Dr. Twerski, however, has been offering simple answers to these questions for several decades now in his book on how the addicted brain thinks. You owe it to yourself to explore these answers.

I must admit that when I first read Twerski's concept of addictive thinking, more years ago than I care to recall, I thought he was, "Taking my inventory." I must admit that as I read, I was drawn in a little more closely with each page - **I was reading a description of myself!** I believe that you too, will be enlightened by Dr. Twerski's examination of the addict's thinking.

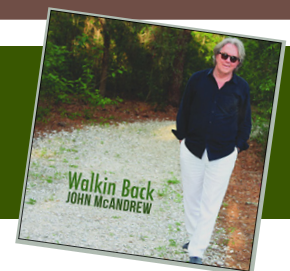
In our recovery, we must look at distorted thinking, poor self-image, isolation, denial, shame, and a multitude of other characteristics in our lives. Without that scrutiny, we are bound to repeat our old patterns of survival. In recovery, we want to thrive, not simply survive.

Upon first going to Alcoholics Anonymous, Dr. Twerski was immediately taken aback at how committed alcoholics were in supporting each other. His thought was that this support is stronger than that in a church or synagogue - these people will go out in the middle of the night to help each other. He is right, service is what we do - we serve our fellows. It's wonderful when our brains begin to clear and we start to realize our potential and take action to serve.

I don't think you will want to miss examining your own, "Stinking thinking" and how it has changed in your recovery. Enjoy the read!

This book can be purchased at Pine Grove's Books and Gifts at 218 S. 28th Ave., Hattiesburg, MS 39401, or by contacting Grace Blackshear at (601) 288-4942 and grace.blackshear@forrestgeneral.com. She will be happy to mail a book to you.

SINGER, SONGWRITER, JOHN McANDREW ROCKS THE SEPTEMBER DAYS OF HOPE!!



Wow—what a lecture and concert by the internationally known singer and songwriter, John McAndrew!!! John is a long-time friend and colleague in the treatment industry. Our patients and alumni members at Pine Grove are still talking about the impact John's songs and stories had on them during our September virtual Days of Hope. We can never thank him enough for sharing himself and his time with us.

I think Eric Clapton, the rock and blues guitarist, singer and songwriter, said it best about John McAndrew after John's performance at the Crossroads Centre Antigua, "Thanks for a wonderful evening of music and inspiration, John. You have an enviable talent for connecting soulfully and meaningfully with your audience."

We now look forward to the day when we can have John back on our Pine Grove campus in person to share with us again. Until then, we will all keep, "...Walkin' back to alright."



MILESTONES

SEPTEMBER 2020

Shivani G. 7 months
 Margaret S. 3 months
 Mary F. 10 months
 Randy T. 1 year
 John G. 18 years
 Kevin C. 8 years

NOVEMBER 2020

Jennifer B. 6 months
 Eddie R. 10 years
 John A. 18 years

If your sobriety/abstinence date is in **December, January, and February** please email your name and date to alumni@pinegrovetreatment.com

OCTOBER 2020

Susan B. 5 months
 Bobby D. 90 days
 Erin K. 11 years
 John P. 5 months
 Melanie M. 2 years
 Katie K. 9 months
 Julie G. 5 months
 Garrett G. 7 years
 Josh S. 3 years

Write on Our Wall

Join us on Facebook and post your message of hope, get some encouragement and get connected!

Email alumni@pinegrovetreatment.com for access to our private group.

1-888-574-HOPE

www.pinegrovetreatment.com

FOLLOW US



Intensive Workshops

Call 1-888-574-HOPE or visit www.pinegrovetreatment.com/self-improvement-workshops.com for information. Please note schedule is subject to change based on registration.



Pine Grove

Intensive Workshops

Forrest Health®

Gratitude – COSA

(All Gratitude/GP Spouses and Family Welcome)

Wednesday – 8:00 p.m. CST
 Conference Call-In #: 319-527-3510
 Access Code: 715268

Questions? Please contact
 Beth A. at 256-566-8554.

This meeting is chaired by a family alumnus and is not associated with Pine Grove/ForrestHealth.

