

PRINCIPLES BEFORE PERSONALITIES

Upcoming Events

Fireside Solutions Anniversary

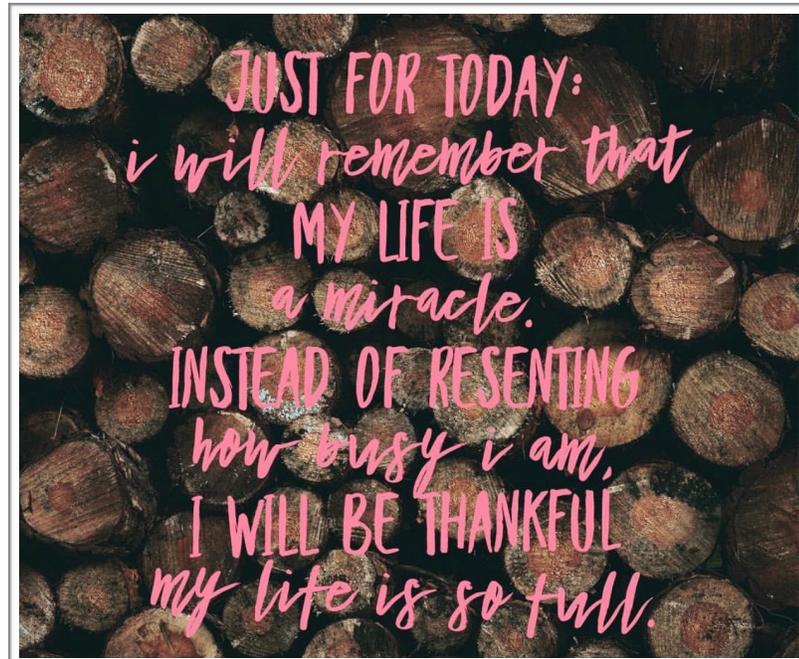
January 19, 6-8 pm
Fellowship and food at 6, Speaker at 7, no addict turned away
7080 Olentangy River Rd, Delaware, 43015

2nd Saturdays ASL Interpretation

Every 2nd Saturday the Gay, Joyous, and Free meeting will have a professional ASL interpreter beginning March 9; meeting is 7:30 - 8:30 pm, 404 S 3rd St, Columbus, 43215

Tower of Recovery 9th Anniversary

February 19, Food and fellowship from 5:30 - 6pm, speaker from 6-7; House of Hope 177 W. Hubbard Ave, Columbus, 43215



The Winners

When I first came into this program, I felt like anything but a winner. I had nothing left. My only "friends" were using addicts; many of the people I knew were locked up, my health was terrible and I was sure I'd be incarcerated, sick or die at some point soon.

I heard all about changing people, places and things. My problem was that everything about my life involved drugs. If I wasn't hanging out with those people or doing those things, what would I do?

After three and a half months of rehab, I got out and 99% of the time took the advice of those who came before me, not to associate with those people from my past. The most important thing I had to do every day was hit a meeting, hit the gym and look for a job. Much of my recovery, at first, was forced because I wasn't making any friends in recovery.

One day after a meeting I was talking to a girl and we shared phone numbers. Soon we met up for dinner. I had heard about this concept of hanging out with the winners, but this took me by surprise. Soon I was meeting her at meetings, met people she knew, went out to dinner after meetings, coffee...whatever. We all had at least a few months.

Upcoming Events Cont.

H&I Literature Fundraiser

March 2, 10 am - 1
pm, 200 E Livingston
Ave, Columbus,
43215. Pancake
breakfast 10 - 12,
guest speaker 12 - 1,
Entry is \$5 per
person, \$7 per
couple, no addict
turned away

Recovery just seemed to click. I kept in touch with these people; we all had this common spiritual goal of changing our lives. We may not have always thought of it in those terms, but now that I was surrounded by people like me, who wanted to be clean, recovery became much easier.

I don't know if I could have made it this far without all of those people. My current "winner" circle seems very large today. We're buying houses, having kids, forming businesses, sponsoring people, and doing life. If you had asked me to define the winners in recovery when I first got clean, I wouldn't have known what to say. Now I just point to all the friends surrounding me.

On Empathy

The language of empathy or being able to have compassion for what someone else is going through is tough for me. My anger and natural mistrust of people make my aggression hard to tone down, but underneath I have a willingness to be understood emotionally, physically, mentally and spiritually. I think that it is very natural to want empathy, especially from others. But for me it is hard to give it because I live in my own head....in my own particular experiences. I get bogged down in the details. That's what my wife says. For example, it's hard for me to put myself out there for family and job associates to sneer at, because before I experienced being an addict, I didn't know how to relate to either. I couldn't empathize. I wouldn't receive empathy. It would be, "Nikki, you know better...and you fucked up your life." My family's love is rough and sometimes it sounds pretentious, so I don't tell them, as, for one, it feels like they'll take my daughter and flip my whole world upside down. I don't want to be treated like a bad person, but the truth is I have no empathy for others because I cannot empathize with where I've brought myself. I want to belong, but I don't lie the trust you have to give to people in order to belong. I say I'm social and a nice person, but the truth is, life hasn't given me any reasons to feel like I can be open and honest with anyone without feeling judged. I guess the best thing to do is to tell my internal conflict to shut it, and go along with the adventures, opportunities and life experiences of today.

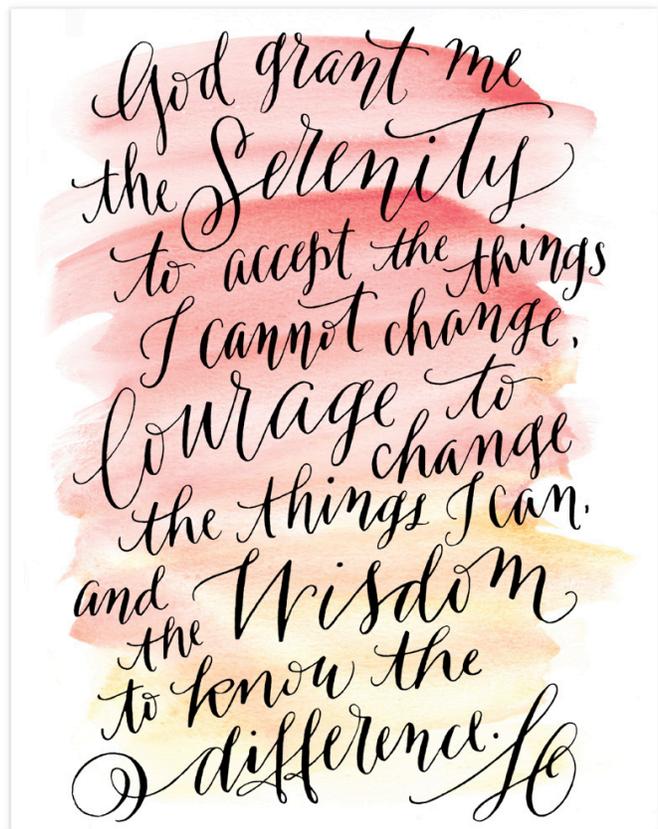


The thing about empathy, when I feel it, is that it's not just good for you (the person I empathize with). You might feel a connection, less alone, like someone sees and acknowledges your pain, and that is great; that is what we have all found here in N.A. But the thing about empathy, when I feel it, that always amazes me is how good it is for me, too. When I empathize with you, I feel connected to you, and feeling connected to addicts is the easiest way for me to feel connected to my Higher Power. When I empathize with you, I am not trapped in my own self-centeredness. I am not feeling irritated

with any number of things that might have happened, or people who might have behaved in ways I don't think they should. I am not worried about money, or health, or what carb-free food I can face eating. I am not angry with my teenagers or colleagues or even bossy security guards. I am seeing and hearing and feeling you, instead. I am surrounding you in the light and love I was surrounded in when, day after day, I would bring my pain to Narcotics Anonymous and share it with all of you, convinced that nothing was getting better, until the day that I realized I wasn't full of pain anymore, and I no longer had the desire to use, and somehow the miracles of recovery had started to happen to me without me noticing. So please, when you're telling yourself that you shouldn't share, and that no one wants to hear your shit, remember that I need to hear it, because it was once my shit, too, and I can empathize with you if you share about it; and you may feel that connection, you may feel seen and heard and understood, and you may feel surrounded by light and love. And you may relieve me of my own self-absorption, you may help me feel connected to my Higher Power, to feel my irritations and annoyances slip away.

by Quentin Heskett

We have been cursed, with a life long disease.
 And many times, it has brought us to our knees.
 I am talking, about the disease of addiction.
 It is such, a terrible affliction.
 Once it's awoken, it takes a hold.
 Having your life, forcefully controlled.
 This is such, a common disease.
 And it comes, in varying degrees.
 When you suffer, from life long addiction.
 You spend your life, stuck in dereliction.
 Having your life, forcefully controlled.
 Stuck in a life, a life so cold.
 When you're active, you live to please.
 Live to serve, this never ending disease.
 While we're using, there are some guarantees.
 You will live, a life of sleaze.
 To your family, you will always displease.
 You will live a life, of constant unease.
 It's so atrocious, this sickness called addiction.
 It is truly, such a haunting restriction.
 Having your life, forcefully controlled.
 Watching your life, rapidly unfold.
 We are forever, stuck with a disease.
 I don't care, if anyone disagrees.



You might believe, if you dealt with the friction.
 That always comes, with the disease of addiction.
 When you're stuck, with this forever disease.
 You can bet, life won't be a breeze.
 All we can do, is work to appease.
 Pray to God, to put our minds at ease
 For we are forever blessed, with a life long disease!