

Mastering Recovery

A Newsletter on Long-Term Sobriety



#31 -- February 2, 2022

Watch Out for Your Shadow

How many weeks of winter will you still have to face?

What I'm Thinking

Yes, it's Groundhog Day. Will that pesky critter see his shadow and we'll have six more weeks of winter? Or will he gift us, no shadow seen, with an early spring? The shadow bodes ill. No shadow, kind of like an invisible nothing around us, is what we want to know. Or with a movie in mind will it just mean that we have to repeat, repeat, repeat?

Our shadow side is the side of us that we would rather not have others know. Sorry, that should read: MY shadow side is the side of ME that I would rather not have others know. It's the memories of all the stuff I am not proud of, the thoughts that keep me awake at night, the dark side of the life force within me. If we don't see our shadow, ignore its existence, pretend we don't have one, it may end up the opposite of today's folklore on the groundhog. We will live in a hope that doesn't reflect reality.

No wonder Star Wars caught so many people's attention. On some level we know that Darth Vader is not our father, Darth Vader is the darker side of our own selves. When we are unwilling or unable to deal with that, we can get stuck. In the end the darkness, the shadow we hide under, is our own refusal to follow our values and the principles we know keep us sober.

When that happens in recovery, we can end up in slippery places. We begin to wonder if we can really do this staying sober thing. We look at others and believe what we see; we look at ourselves and believe what others can't see.

I have found in my own recovery that underneath it all, I am most likely to get to that shadowy place when I am unaware of what my guiding principles are. Or at least unwilling to step back and take inventory. That's why in last week's newsletter I listed the principles that guide recovery.

For the four weeks of this month I will look at questions to inventory three of these each week. Yes, they do follow the Twelve Steps. But by looking at them with different words, we may find how to move away from the possibilities of getting stuck. Use the comments and questions below as a way to take your own Principles Inventory.

It is not something to be afraid of. It is worse to ignore the shadows.



Facing Challenges - Building Recovery

These first three principles worked at getting us into treatment. We knew we were sunk if there is no way out, no hope. We began to look around and find possible answers. We found a treatment center or a Twelve-Step meeting hoping that it would work. Finally, we took the action to enter treatment or go to the meeting. We surrendered to the process. They are the principles of growth and life. Change is unavoidable.

1. **Acceptance:** Acceptance is to be non-judgmental, self-aware, and mindfully aware of what is around us. It does not mean blind "giving-in". It means simply being aware that this is the way things are- for today.

- *How's my acceptance today?*
- *Am I arguing more with what's happening?*

2. **Hope:** As we remain clean and sober, we remember the hope we felt when we first knew that there was a way through the disease.

- *Do I still believe that hope is real and will sustain me?*
- *Do I feel like it's worth planning for tomorrow?*

3. **Faith/surrender:** Surrender takes faith, trusting whatever you are surrendering yourself to.

- *Am I willing to trust and surrender to whatever changes I need to make?*
- *What am I resisting- and why?*

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Picture of the Week



Masks are Masks

What do they hide?
What do they reveal?

Mardi Gras, Gulf Shores, AL, 2017

Quote of the Week

When we are aware of our weaknesses or negative tendencies,
we open the opportunity to work on them.

—
Allan Lokos

Tools and Resources

Here's a link again to a good resource podcast, **The Addicted Mind**. Last week's episode looked at where Bill W. got his inspiration for the "spiritual" part of the program. Really well done interview with a lot to think about.

[Link to the Addicted Mind podcast.](#)

Here's a **[link to my podcast interview](#)** from last fall on
The Addicted Mind.

What podcasts on recovery have you found? I'm always looking for new sources. Please let me know. **[Email Me](#)** with ideas or questions and watch for more information in the next month.

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