

Autumn 2021

# THE CONNECTION

Connecting the Barrington and Lake Zurich A.A. community with news, stories and articles of hope and inspiration



Visit [www.barringtonaa.org](http://www.barringtonaa.org) – For information about local meetings and AA assistance or contacts call our 24/7 answering service - 847-382-4455

## Anger – By David L.

### Transcript From District 28 Speaker Meeting

I'm mad as hell and I just can't take it anymore! Anger is destroying my life and I want it to end. I feel like a bomb ready to explode here and now..... Where did this come from??

I'm not a Doc or a Psychiatrist but I'm pretty sure that anger begins with fear, but more on this later.

Anger is a subject that has haunted me my entire life. I felt the topic would be very relevant for this setting and I'd like to start by thanking my many fellow AA's and acknowledge that I plan to plagiarize from discussions over these past weeks as I have explored this topic in a number of meetings.

But to start let me give a brief history of my life with anger!

I identify as an Alcoholic, but what does that really mean? I come from a family of either non-drinkers on one side - or normal drinkers on the other. Going back numerous generations on both sides there is very little evidence of any alcoholics. No one in my family has exhibited the "physical craving" of substances like alcohol or drugs, and frankly speaking - neither have I. Even during my worst days of intravenous drug use, while I saw the intense - uncontrollable craving in others, I did not experience it myself. No shakes, no physical symptoms that I have clearly seen in others. Yet I am still an alcoholic!

My alcoholism started at a young age, many years before my first drink!

**ELECTION TIME!!**

***District 28 will be holding elections for rotating positions this November!***

***Please see the details on page 7.***

Continued Page 2



Anger

continued from Page 1

The unmet needs of a child can lead to compulsive behaviors as an adult!

I remember my natural father as a kind and loving figure, up until around the age of 7 or 8 and then he was gone. On the other hand my mother was raised with the misconception that she was the most important person in the world. Her narcissism created a terrible place for me and my little brother. After divorcing, she went on to marry a man who treated her like the queen she wanted to be, but abused us with a terrible ferocity. I lived everyday in terrible fear and laid my head every night in the bed of anger.

At 17, I had a nervous breakdown and was accused of using drugs by my step father - shortly after this I found drugs and alcohol and what they could do for me! Alcohol and drugs simply became a self medication for these fears and the resulting anger.

A wise man once said - "Anger is the punishment we give ourselves for the mistakes of others!" For me, it is more the case that anger is the punishment I give myself and everything around me for my own FEAR!

Fear is a powerful force in all living things, the Fight or Flight Response. But what is the connection to anger? I know that I cannot be effective either fighting or fighting if I am angry. Quite the opposite really, I'll ineffectively fight blinded by anger when I should be running.

So what is the connection between our fears and our anger? I think it is our distorted perception! In the cut and dry world of kill or be killed, true fight or flight in its most physical form, our adrenal system heightens our perception and awareness to our strongest - best selves.

But in my case there was never any resolution to my daily fight or flight response! No fight I could win - no safe place to run!

With nothing to guide me or relieve me of the danger, my mind developed an imaginary world and channeled my hormones into a raging anger. With this distorted worldview and addiction to anger, so began my life of abuse. Abuse of drugs, alcohol and abuse directed towards those around me. Fast forward about 40 years and my story is like many you have heard in these meetings.

Through the fellowship of this program I now have some few years of sobriety from drugs and alcohol. However this sobriety has brought me face to face with my real addiction -- Anger!

*"I know that I cannot be effective either fighting or fighting if I am angry. Quite the opposite really, I'll ineffectively fight blinded by anger when I should be running."*

What is the solution for anger? I have been reading a book by Thich Nhat Hanh entitled ANGER. In it he puts forward a very interesting idea: To heal my anger I must first learn to heal the anger in others! I thought about this and I brought it up in meetings. Responses were straight from the book, clean your own side of the street, you have no control over others, pay attention to what you can control. One thing I have come to learn is I have little to no control over anything, including my own thinking.

Continued Page 4

## Q&A: District 28 Answering Service – By Julie W.

**What do you do as the answering service chair?**

As the answering service chair, I am responsible for the District 28 answering service phone and the binder of information that goes along with the phone. The answering service is a cell phone connected to the district hotline number, paid for by District 28 donations, and facilitated by volunteers. This means I ask meetings if they would be willing to volunteer to take the district phone; typically, one meeting takes the phone for a month and then one person from that meeting takes the phone for a week at a time. Ideally, four people from a meeting would need to be willing to take the phone for a meeting to volunteer, which would be decided by taking a group conscience. I like to have the phone schedule set up for the year, but that doesn't always happen and that's ok. Someone always steps up to take the phone. The binder that goes with the phone is full of resources for answering the phone, and it is important that it is kept up to date. The binder is also used to log the phone calls that we receive. We record the gender of the person calling, whether they are calling for themselves or someone else and what the purpose of the phone call was, which I then report at our monthly district meeting.

**Why do we have a district phone?**

The purpose of the phone is in support of our primary purpose: to help another alcoholic.

**What do volunteers who take the district phone do?**

Volunteers who take the district phone are responsible for answering the phone when people call, it is important that the person who has the phone is available to answer it when people call, or return the phone calls in a timely matter. We receive a variety of calls, but more often than not people are calling to find a meeting. Simply being available to share your experience, strength and hope with someone could keep them from tak-

ing a drink for one more day. Once in a while, we will receive a 12-step call, and the binder that is with the phone contains a list of AA members and their contact information who are qualified and willing to assist with these phone calls. Also, if anyone has questions regarding the phone or a phone call, they are always welcome to call me and I will help however I can.

**Why is it important for groups/people to take the district phone?**

Without volunteers to take the district phone, we would not have a district hotline and answering service. There are so many people who have no idea what AA is and this phone is a great resource for them. It provides an initial point of contact for both those struggling with alcoholism, as well as those just wanting information on Alcoholics Anonymous.

**How is the phone rotated among groups?**

I have a schedule of who has volunteered to take the district phone for each month and their contact information. I ask that the group that currently has the phone contact the next group and set up passing the phone along. If the current group is unable to do so, my contact information is in the binder and they can contact me to pick the phone up and I pass it along to the next group. It is the volunteers within the same meetings' responsibility to pass the phone to one another. This was a lot easier with in-person meetings because they could just pass the phone along when they met each week.

**How can groups volunteer to take the district phone?**

The district answering service phone is super easy and rewarding service work. If you would like to volunteer to take the district phone or have any questions regarding the phone, you can call or email me: Julie W.

(847)754-8441

[jwodzin@yahoo.com](mailto:jwodzin@yahoo.com)

## Anger

*continued from Page 2*

But then I read it again, he didn't say to control the anger in others, he said to HEAL it! The method he proposes for this is called deep listening.

A Bomb Ready To Explode - needs to be defused! Compassionate Deep Listening is a pure expression of Love to defuse that bomb.

What would happen if I did - actually, - deeply listen? If I put everything I am into truly and deeply connecting with and listening to another? He goes on to say that I must learn this new way of listening and practice it - before I try it on those closest to ME. The ones who know best where my buttons are located and how to push them! We in AA have the perfect place to learn how to deeply listen. We NEED to learn how for so many reasons.

*"I know that I cannot be effective either fighting or flighting if I am angry. Quite the opposite really, I'll ineffectively fight blinded by anger when I should be running."*

The kind of deep listening described [in ANGER] involves every part of me. This total focus on another person diminishes the thinking part of ourselves! I had it all backwards. Instead of stop thinking and start listening, if I just start listening, then the thinking will stop on its own.

I am convinced that our thinking mind blocks us from a connection with our higher power. The greatest changes in my life over these past few years have happened during those brief moments when my thinking stopped!

What else happens when we deeply listen? We connect with another person on a very deep and

personal level! It's like two people becoming one, and it can be amazing!

## *Looking for a Saturday night speaker meeting via Zoom?*

District 28 is hosting a Saturday night speaker meeting the *third Saturday* of every month at 6:00 p.m.

My ego wants to fight, to have its way - that still suffering child is lashing out against those deep seated fears from so long ago. These fears and anger give rise to my distorted perception; this distorted perception affects both my world view and my ability to connect to my higher power. This distorted perception causes me to react to normal situations in an abnormal fashion, to get raging mad over the slightest things.

This is now my default state of being! Left on its own - I am destined to suffer the "Angry Old Man" syndrome. However, deeply listening to another creates moments of non-thinking and opens the connection. This deep connection between two people channels the healing power.

Continued Page 5

## Anger

*continued from Page 4*

There is anger, there is love, there is healing! The kind of healing that heals both people; it even moves the world in a better direction.

Consider these words from Eckhart Tolle in *The Power of Now*: "A group of people coming together in a state of presence generates a collective energy field of great intensity. It not only raises the degree of presence of each member of the group but also helps to free the collective human consciousness from its current state of mind dominance."

This sounds like what "should be" happening at my AA meetings. I use the term "should be" because I don't know about you, but when I'm at a meeting I'm thinking instead of listening! Thinking things like "When is he going to shut up and finish! We've all heard that same story a million times! Let me cut in I know exactly what he needs to hear!"

What would happen if I truly used the opportunity AA meetings offer to practice deeply listening? Maybe the clarity from a deep connection would help focus the thoughts of a rambling mind. Maybe the person telling the same story over and over - just needs someone to deeply listen once! Maybe I don't know what someone needs to hear, but by truly and deeply listening, God will heal us both!

Instead of me praying, "God give me patience and give it to me right now!", I might learn that the gift of compassionate understanding is even greater! I might learn that the gift of compassionate understanding is even greater!

The program talks about prayer and meditation and a higher power. Things that are hard to understand, but is it possible that deeply listening is a form of meditation? If I put everything I am into listening to you, might the love within that connection be more of a prayer than when I kneel and pray for myself? Could the answers that seem so far away be right in front of me?

I don't know the answers to these and many other questions, but I do know that what I'm doing now ain't working!

What do I have to lose? I know going to meetings helps me, I have to at least pretend like I'm listening when others are talking, what do I have to lose by making it REAL?

Make happiness a priority in your life, to choke out the weeds of fear and anger you must cultivate the flowers of love. These meetings are a place to learn these skills. Deeply listen and learn - deeply listen and heal.

Written by: David L.

### **HAVE A STORY, LESSON, OR BIT OF GRATITUDE YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE?**

WRITE AN ARTICLE AND SUBMIT IT TO THE

CONNECTION! WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

PLEASE EMAIL YOUR ARTICLES TO THE NEWSLETTER CHAIR, SARAH R., VIA EMAIL AT [SERACINE85@GMAIL.COM](mailto:SERACINE85@GMAIL.COM), OR THE ALTERNATE NEWSLETTER CHAIR, SEAN C., VIA EMAIL AT [SEANCAS-SIDY95@GMAIL.COM](mailto:SEANCAS-SIDY95@GMAIL.COM)

USE SUBJECT LINE *CONNECTIONS*

*NEWSLETTER* SO IT DOES NOT GET LOST.



*There are a handful of meetings still organizing online, some using a hybrid method, with the option to participate in person or virtually, and some that meet fully in-person. Below is a list of meetings categorized by hybrid, in-person only, and online only. This list is comprised of information gathered in the District 28 meeting.*

**Some hybrid meetings are:**

[Tuesday Night 12 & 12](#) – 7:30 p.m. Tuesday

[Still At It 12 & 12](#) – 7:30 p.m. Wednesday

[Living in Recovery](#) – 7:30 p.m. Friday

[Sisters in Sobriety \(Women's Meeting\)](#) – 8:00 a.m. Saturday (NOTE: the Zoom meeting number has recently changed.)

[Sunday Early Birds](#) – 9:00 a.m. Sunday

[Sunday Morning Newcomers](#) – 11:00 a.m. Sunday

[No Name Group](#) – 10:30 a.m. Sunday

[Sunday Night Big Book](#) – 7:30 p.m. Sunday

***Some meetings that are in-person ONLY are:***

[Tuesday Night Real Time \(Men's Meeting\)](#) – 7:30 p.m. Tuesday

[Lake Zurich 12 & 12](#) – 7:00 p.m. Wednesday

[Barr Pals](#) – 8:00 p.m. Tuesday

[Saturday Morning Men \(Men's Meeting\)](#) – 8:30 am Saturday (NOTE: the location of this meeting is no longer at St. Anne's Church in Barrington. It is now located at the Presbyterian Church of Barrington on 6 Brinker Rd.)

***Some meetings that are currently online ONLY:***

[Sober Sisters 12 & 12](#) – 7:00 p.m. Tuesday

[Women's Way](#) – 7:00 p.m. Wednesday

[Barrington Big Book Meditation](#) – 7:00 p.m. Wednesday

[Sober Sisters Big Book Study](#) – 7:00 p.m. Thursday

**Please inquire with meeting contacts for further meeting information.**

Please send information about meetings that need support, so it can be printed in *The Connection*! For a full list of District 28 meetings, please visit our website: <http://barrington.org/meetings/>

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*District 28 elections will take place at the next District 28 meeting on Monday, November 1<sup>st</sup> at 6:30 p.m. on Zoom.*

*The following positions will be rotating:*

*Archives Chair, Answering Services Chair, Alternate DCM, Grapevine Chair, Alternate Literature Chair, Newsletter Chair, Treasurer Chair, Treatment Chair, Alternate Treatment Chair, Website Chair, Alternate Website Chair*

*The following positions are currently empty and in need of people to step up:*

*Alternate Archives Chair, Alternate Accessibilities Chair, Alternate Bridging the Gap Chair, Alternate CPC/PI Chair, Corrections Chair, Alternate Corrections Chair, Alternate Grapevine Chair, Alternate Literature Chair, Alternate Treasurer*

*District 28 meets the first Monday of every month at 6:30 p.m. on Zoom.*

**Want to support GSO? Please see this website to make contributions: <https://contribution.aa.org/>**

**Don't forget to support Northern**

**Illinois Area 20 (NIA 20)! For more information, please visit the NIA 20 website:**

**<https://aa-nia.org/>**