

The Miracle of The Twelve Step Recovery Process

The Miracle of The Twelve Step Recovery Process

{xtypo_info} "The Twelve Step program of AA provides a practical program for accessing Spiritual power in dealing with day-to-day human life. A formula for integrating the Spiritual into the physical. Even though some of the steps, as originally written, contain shaming and abusive wording, the Twelve Step process and the ancient Spiritual principles underlining it are invaluable tools in helping the individual being start down, and stay on, a path aligned with Truth.

It is out of the Twelve Step Recovery movement that our understanding of the dysfunctional nature of civilization has evolved. It is out of the Alcoholic Recovery movement that the term "Codependent" has emerged." {xtypo_info}

Quote from Codependence: The Dance of Wounded Souls

This is the first of 6 (possibly 7) articles about the Twelve Steps. In March of 2002 as I was preparing to move the bulk of the book I wrote and published online about the September 11th Attack on America to my Joy2MeU Journal (as I forewarned in my January 2002 Update) I decided to move this series of articles to the regular Joy2MeU web site. I realized that - though the foundation of my work is the ancient Spiritual Principles and process that I learned by working a twelve step program, and I talk about those principles and that process to some extent in all of my writing - I did not have very much written here on my regular web site that actually talks about the steps themselves.

When I originally started publishing these articles in the Joy2MeU Journal, it was because I thought I would need to create enough content to make the Journal attractive to potential subscribers. The Journal has turned into something quite different from my original vision of it, and because the story of my recovery and Spiritual journey expanded to include a personal intimate journal about my process over the last 3 years, there is plenty of content in that Journal for people who resonate strongly with my writing. Thus, moving this series of articles (which has been expanded from 4 to 6 articles) to Joy2MeU to make them available to the public as a whole makes sense.

I am profoundly, deeply, everlastingly grateful for the gift of the 12 steps. The process of learning to apply the Spiritual Principles in my life has changed my life from an unendurable hell to an adventure that is exciting and enjoyable most of the time. The twelve steps work. That is the bottom line. They work to help a person transform their experience of life into something better. They work to help a person learn to develop a relationship with life and self that allows room for inner peace, happiness, and Joy. The twelve step process works to help a person open up to Love.

As I explain in my book Codependence: The Dance of Wounded Souls, planetary conditions caused human beings to develop a relationship with being human that was reversed to Love and Truth. The reason this human experience is so screwed up is because humans have been doing life backwards - looking outside for Truth and Love, for validation, meaning, and purpose. Outer dependence is dysfunctional. It is the reason we do not know how to love our neighbors as our self - because we do not know how to Love our self. It is the reason we have war and poverty, pollution and child abuse, rape and bigotry. This world would be a much nicer place if everyone was working a twelve step program.

The good news is that there has been a major change in those planetary conditions, and a new age - an Age of Healing and Joy - has dawned in human consciousness. The human condition is changing. We have entered a new time in human evolution - a time in which we are learning to manifest Love into the world by learning to access Love for self. The twelve step process has played a major role in the Spiritual Revolution that is taking place on this planet. The mystical gift of the twelve steps greatly accelerated the process of bringing the planetary energy field to critical mass so that this change could take place. In this series of articles I am sharing my perspective of the twelve steps.

{xtypo_info} "I believe that in a hundred years historians will look back and pinpoint this milestone as the single most important event in the twentieth century. This milestone was the founding of Alcoholics Anonymous in Akron, Ohio, in June of 1935.

Besides the invaluable gift of sobriety that AA has given to millions of Alcoholics, it also started a revolution in Spiritual consciousness.

The dramatic success and expansion of AA facilitated the spread of a radically revolutionary idea which has traditionally, in Western Civilization, been considered heresy. This was not a new idea but rather a reintroduction and clarification of an old idea, coupled with a formula for practical application of the concept into day-to-day human life experience.

This revolutionary idea was that an unconditionally Loving Higher Power exists with whom the individual being can personally communicate. A Higher Power that is so powerful that it has no need to judge the humans it created because this Universal Force is powerful enough to ensure that everything unfolds perfectly from a Cosmic Perspective.

This reintroduction of the revolutionary concept of an accessible Loving God has been clarified to specifically include the concept that the individual being can define this Universal Force according to his/her own understanding, and can

develop a personal, intimate relationship with this Higher Power.

In other words, no one is needed as an intermediary between you and your creator. No outside agency has the right to impose upon you its definition of God.

The spread of Alcoholics Anonymous, and the other Anonymous programs which sprang out of AA, is the widest and most effective dissemination of this radical revolutionary concept that has ever occurred in Western Civilization.

Mystics, gnostics, and certain "primitive" peoples have, throughout recorded human history, understood the Truth in this concept - but the "organized religions" of urban-based civilizations have persecuted, tortured, and crucified any messengers or groups of people who believed in a Loving, personal God or Goddess - because it threatened the power of those organized religions' control over the masses and therefore their very existence. This time the dissemination of the message has been effective because: The time was right; the revolutionary concept was camouflaged as part of a successful treatment for a fatal, incurable disease; and it was accompanied by the Twelve Step Spiritual program."

Quote from Codependence: The Dance of Wounded Souls

Expansion

In moving what was originally a 4 part series of articles to this web site it has expanded. The series could end up being as many as 7 articles before it is finished with me. On this page is the most recent succinct discussion of the twelve step process that I have written. The next article will be the body of the first article of my original Journal series slightly expanded.

Immediately below are several excerpts from Chapter 2 of Attack on America - A Spiritual Healing Perspective. Below that are some tables with different versions of the twelve steps. The last section of this article is a short excerpt about the Principles of Twelve Step Recovery along with my version of the of the first three steps from intellectual and emotional levels as I understand and apply them - originally published online in 1998. At the bottom of the page is a disclaimer to let you know that Alcoholics Anonymous has not approved any deviation from their approach to the Twelve Steps and any reference I make to the steps is not meant to imply otherwise.

"One of the core characteristics of this disease of Codependence is intellectual polarization - black and white thinking. Rigid extremes - good or bad, right or wrong, love it or leave it, one or ten. Codependence does not allow any gray area - only black and white extremes.

Life is not black and white. Life involves the interplay of black and white. In other words, the gray area is where life takes place. A big part of the healing process is learning the numbers two through nine - recognizing that life is not black and white.

Life is not some kind of test, that if we fail, we will be punished. We are not human creatures who are being punished by an avenging god. We are not trapped in some kind of tragic place out of which we have to earn our way by doing the "right" things.

We are Spiritual Beings having a human experience. We are here to learn. We are here to go through this process that is life. We are here to feel these feelings. "

Quote from Codependence: The Dance of Wounded Souls

Codependency: A Dance of Black and White Thinking and Toxic Shame

" We were powerless out of ego-self to do anything any different than we did it. We are powerless out of ego-self to heal this disease. Through Spiritual Self, through our Spiritual Connection, we have access to all the power in the Universe.

We need to have the willingness: willingness to get to a new level of self-honesty; willingness to start listening to the Loving inner voice instead of the shaming ones; willingness to face the terror of healing the emotional wounds."

Quote from Codependence: The Dance of Wounded Souls

There is an acronym in Twelve Step Recovery, that like many simple sayings, it full of Truth. That acronym is HOW. The letters stand for honesty, openness, and willingness. It is vital to be willing to start looking at life and self from larger perspectives, willing to take the action necessary to align with healing. To be open to changing our attitudes, to feeling

our feelings. And it is so vital to start being willing and open to getting more honest with ourselves.

Codependence is dishonest. It is an emotional defense system adapted by humans to try to survive the pain of feeling unworthy and unlovable. From a codependent perspective there are no choices - only two extremes, black and white. Right or wrong.

Because as small children we did not have any perspective or discernment (prior to the age of reason, which occurs about 7 as our brains develop) we were incapable as viewing our parents as anything other than perfect Higher Powers. Our God and Goddess. Because our Higher Powers were wounded and did not know how to Love self, we were wounded and got the message that something must be wrong with us. Toxic Shame.

{xtypo_info} "That shame is toxic and is not ours - it never was! We did nothing to be ashamed of - we were just little kids. Just as our parents were little kids when they were wounded and shamed, and their parents before them, etc., etc. This is shame about being human that has been passed down from generation to generation.

There is no blame here, there are no bad guys, only wounded souls and broken hearts and scrambled minds."

{/xtypo_info}

Quote from Codependence: The Dance of Wounded Souls

Out of our codependent relationship with life, there are only two extremes: blame them, or blame me. Buy into the belief that they are to blame for what I am feeling - or I am to blame because I am a shameful unworthy being. The emotional pain of feeling unlovable to our parents - which is a reflection of unbearable anguish of feeling separated from The Source - can feel like a bottomless pit of agonizing suffering. At the core of our wounding is the unbearable emotional pain resulting from having internalized the message that God - our Source - does not Love us because we are personally defective and shameful.

Our addictions, compulsions, and obsessions; our continuing quest to reach the destination, to find the fix; our inability to be present in the now through worrying about the future or ruminating about the past; are all tools that we used to avoid the emotional pain. Our behavior patterns and dysfunctional relationships (of all kinds, with other people, with money, with our gender and sexuality) are symptoms. Codependence is a defense system that was adapted by our damaged egos to try to avoid falling into the abyss of shame and pain within.

We formed our core relationship with self, other people, and life based upon this feeling of toxic shame. Like the corruption at the foundation of Western Civilization, there is corruption in the foundation of our relationship with self. Reflections.

In order to start changing our ego programming and healing our emotional wounds, it is necessary to start Loving ourselves. We start Loving ourselves by opening up to the possibility that maybe we are Lovable. We start Loving ourselves by using our will power to start changing our attitudes, beliefs, perspectives, and behaviors - in order to start changing our relationship with self, with our own emotions.

We are Co-Creators of our human experience, but for most of our lives we were allied with the disease - lived life out of the fear, lack, scarcity, separation programming of the damaged ego. We were powerless to change our ego programming out of the false self, the ego self image, that was based upon the dishonesty inherent in black and white thinking.

Our paths unfolded perfectly to bring us to a point where some life event, or series of events, brought us to our knees, caused us to hit an emotional bottom that made us start being honest enough with ourselves to see that we needed some help. When we started to seek help, we opened up to allowing the Universe to start guiding us with carrots instead of using the stick. We opened up to becoming willing and honest enough to start learning the lessons we are here to learn instead of being trapped in repeating our patterns.

Recovery - aligning with Love instead of shame

The tool, the gift, that I discovered when I was willing to start asking for help was the Twelve Steps. The Twelve Step Recovery program that was developed by Alcoholics Anonymous is a work of mystical Spirituality. It is a formula for integrating Spiritual Truth into day to day human life.

{xtypo_info} "The Twelve Step Recovery process is so successful because it provides a formula for integrating different levels. It is by recognizing that we are powerless to control our life experiences out of ego-self that we can access the power out of True Self, Spiritual Self. By surrendering the illusion of ego control we can reconnect with our Higher Selves. Selfishness out of ego-self is destroying the planet. Selfishness out of Spiritual Self is what will save the planet."

{/xtypo_info}

Quote from Codependence: The Dance of Wounded Souls

One of those principles - that really scared me when I first heard I had to develop it - was humility. I equated humility with humiliation because of my toxic shame.

In Truth, humility really means to see clearly. To see that as a human being the reality is that I am not perfect. There are some areas I am strong in - that I have gifts, abilities, talents, skills - and some that I am weak in. None of us human beings are perfect in our humanness - we are all perfect in our Spiritual essence.

One person will be talented in one area but weak in another. Because we got the message in childhood that we were supposed to be perfect, that it was shameful to be 'wrong' - and we were taught to look outside and compare ourselves to determine our worth - we focused on our strengths as proof we were better than others. Which also meant we needed to deny our weaknesses - or deny that the areas in which we were weak had any importance. Humility is about owning both our strengths and our weaknesses - and realizing that all human beings have both strengths and weaknesses.

{xtypo_info} " Looking outside of ourselves for self-definition and self-worth means that we have to judge people in order to feel good about ourselves. There is no other way to do it when you look outside.

We were taught to have ego-strength through judgment - better than, prettier than, smarter than, richer than, stronger than, etc., etc.

In a Codependent society everyone has to have someone to look down on in order to feel positive about him/herself. This is the root of all bigotry, racism, sexism, and prejudice in the world.

True self-worth does not come from looking down on anyone or anything. True self-worth comes from awakening to our connection to everyone and everything.

The Truth is that we are like snowflakes: Each individual is unique and different and special and we are all made from the same thing. We are all cut from the same cloth. We are all part of the Eternal ONENESS that is the Great Spirit.

When we start looking within and celebrating the Truth of who we Truly are, then we can celebrate our unique differences instead of judging them out of fear."/xtypo_info}

Quote from Codependence: The Dance of Wounded Souls

When I started to open up to the concept that there was a Higher Power who Loved me Unconditionally, then I could start getting past the shame to seeing the gray area. Then I could start to stop reacting out of the black and white, fear based programming of my damaged ego.

When I started to be open to seeing myself more clearly, then I could start to see that I had more in common with other human beings than I had differences. Then I could start to see that thinking I was better than someone else because of a gift is false pride. A gift is just that - a gift. Talent, intelligence, looks - those are gifts to be cherished and cultivated, not standards for feeling better than another human being.

Through working the twelve step program, I could start to understand that every cloud has a silver lining. (I just flashed on my mother in childhood telling me that every curse is also a blessing - in regard to my emotional sensitivity I believe. We do hear messages of Spiritual Truth from early on - it is applying them to our lives that we need some help figuring out how to do.) A gift also carries obligations with it. Though feeling pride about a gift was false - what I could take pride in was the action I took to cultivate that gift. (Which of course I had not done in some cases because of the black and white thinking and toxic shame - I was afraid to take a risk because I was sure I would fail. Another thing to realize I was powerless over and forgive myself for.)

Through starting to see myself more clearly - by stopping with the shame of self and judgment of others to protect myself from that shame - then I could more easily see that we were more alike than different. Then I could start to be open to believing that maybe I had worth and deserved Love - and that you did also.

Feeling shameful and reacting to life from fear, caused me to focus on how I was different (and better, or worse) than you. The more I could start to see that I am not perfect and that it is OK - the more I could access the acceptance to allow you to not be perfect.

That helped me to stop taking other peoples behavior so personally. When I started understanding how I had been reacting - started seeing myself more clearly and accepting reality, I could also start seeing that what you were doing was not really about me, it was you reacting to your wounds.

The more clearly I saw myself within the framework of a Spiritual recovery process, the easier it became to see that I had not been seeing myself or you clearly - or life

