

Daily Reflections for Practical Twelve Step Recovery

INTRODUCTION

When one searches the internet for inspirational quotes, there are thousands to be found, probably tens of thousands. To have peace of mind and more enjoyable lives, we need not change thousands of things. There's a great deal of repetition in what adds up to the wisdom of the ages. As an example, letting go of resentment is a principal tenet of Buddhism. There are few new ideas, notwithstanding our desire to be original.

I have drawn from a wide variety of sources—psychiatrists, psychologists, psychoanalysts, philosophers, addiction researchers, and academics. You'll hear from civil rights activists, therapists, self-help gurus, motivational speakers, presidents and other politicians. Our celebrity contingent has actors, athletes, talk show hosts, Mr. Grinch, Rocky Balboa and Taylor Swift. We have novelists, playwrights and poets; inventors, teachers, and businessmen. Artists and martial artists share their thoughts. Sociologists have looked at AA and weigh in with their conclusions.

There are snippets from the weird and wonderful world of conventional recovery literature and quotations from the wealth of (mostly recent) secular iterations of the 12-step process. Books written by women suggest some tweaking as we're not all egomaniacs. Some critics present their objections to the disease model. We travel back many centuries for the wisdom of Buddhists, Taoists, Tibetans, Stoics and ancient Greeks. The ancient words remind us that there is very little that's new in the world. We have some stellar quotations from some folks with tarnished reputations. The quotes from "bad boys" you may judge as you will.

We visit the science of addiction and I could not stop myself from offering some interesting bits of AA history. I also share some personal experience gained as an active AA member for the past thirty-three years. I hope you find value in the book.

November 17 - *You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You are able to say to yourself, "I lived through this horror. I can take the next thing that comes along." You must do the thing you think you cannot do.*

Eleanor Roosevelt 1884-1962

For most people, our instinctive reaction to fear is flight. We want to run, hide, and hope it goes away. Children *literally* run and hide. There's even a game where we "hide and go seek." There is only one seeker but many hiders. Of course, in playing the game, no one is *really* afraid.

Some of us are plagued with gnawing feelings of uneasiness that are constantly there. Only the level changes. The cause may be completely unknown. For others, anxiety comes in specific circumstances. I have to make a speech at school or I'm called on to answer a question. Perhaps I have the knowledge to respond correctly but my pulse rate climbs, my face flushes, and I might stammer or get short of breath. I'm afraid that the other children will laugh at me. When they do, my worst fears are confirmed. The next time, it's worse.

When I discover the magical transformative effects of liquor, the anxiety of a stressful situation is quelled. A few more drinks and I feel a confidence that is indescribable. I like that so much that I drink as often as I can and, when the consequences mount, I discover that I am unable to stop. It's a tremendous betrayal—my best friend, alcohol, has stabbed me in the back. In recovery, I rack up some weeks and months. There's hope, but, in the deepest recesses of the mind there's the faint music of an old song and a hard-wired promise that a bit of liquor will remove anxiety and other unpleasantness. Reliving the horror in my mind and remembering that it was a horror is critical. Sobriety at times means that I must look fear in the face.

Am I more anxious than most people? Did liquor or drugs remove fear, at least temporarily? Does living through a horror make the next one a little easier?

bob's newest book, *Daily Reflections for Practical 12 Step Recovery*, will soon be published and available on Amazon.

Of course he has written two other books which are quite popular and also available on Amazon: [*Key Players in AA History*](#) and [*The Secret Diaries of Bill W.*](#)
