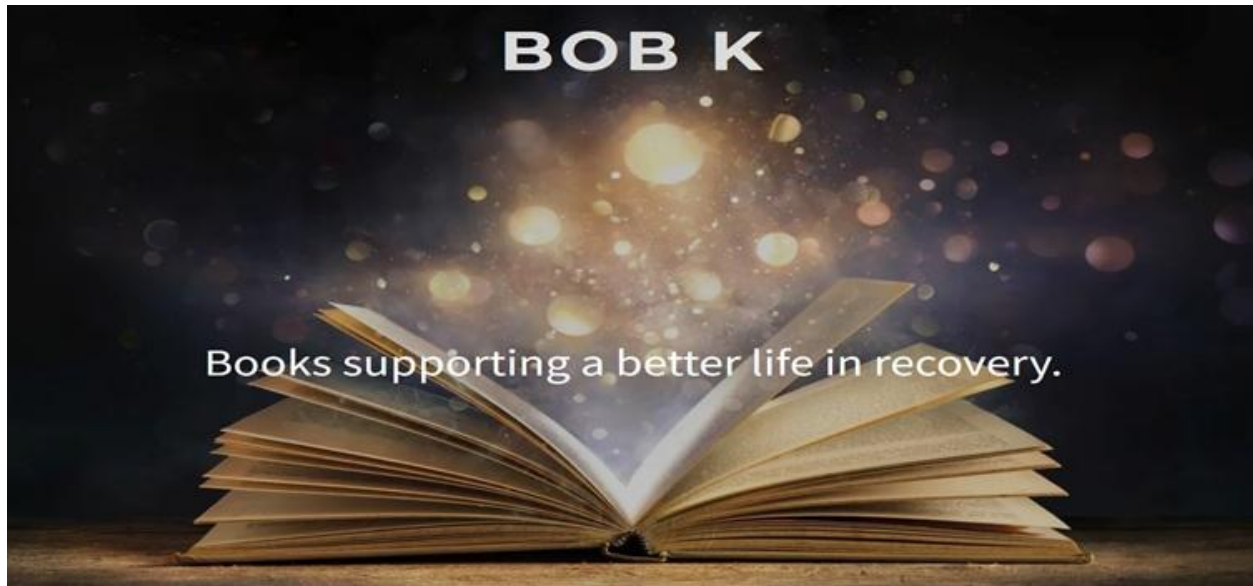


# Daily Reflections



*by bob k.*

*January 11 The spirituality of imperfection begins with the recognition that trying to be perfect is the most tragic human mistake.*

The Spirituality of Imperfection, Kurtz & Ketcham, p. 5

The authors elaborate on this idea and, in doing so, get to the core of Alcoholics Anonymous. “In direct contradiction of the serpent’s promise in Eden’s Garden, the book Alcoholics Anonymous suggests, ‘First of all, we had to quit playing God.’ According to the way of life that flows from this insight, it is only by ceasing to play God, by coming to terms with errors and shortcomings, and by accepting the inability to control every aspect of their lives that alcoholics (or any human beings) can find the peace and serenity that alcohol (or other drugs, or sex, money, material possessions, power, or privilege) promise but never deliver.” (Kurtz & Ketcham, p. 5)

The American Dream offers false promises. Bill Wilson developed low self-esteem as the result of a trying childhood. He thought that money, material possessions, power and privilege would bring the admiration of his fellows, prestige, and an elevated sense of self-worth. Years earlier, some such feelings had come when his kindly maternal grandfather had made a huge fuss about his successful construction of a boomerang. “You’re a Number One man!”

Here was the key—accomplishment.

Determination and persistence would bring achievement and happiness would follow. In the adult world, that didn’t prove to be true and Wilson numbed himself with increasing quantities of alcohol, even during his period of material success. His “life formula” was flawed. He sought admiration but instead was seen as a drunken, loutish braggart.

When you had success, was it disappointing? Is 12-step spirituality more appealing than religion? Is it a fruitless mission to seek to control things falling outside of a very small range? Were you attracted to the openness of your peers in recovery regarding their imperfection?



Daily  
Reflections  
for Modern  
Twelve Step  
Recovery

bob k.

*January 12 Happiness and freedom begin with a clear understanding of one principle. Some things are within your control. And some things are not.*  
Epictetus, d. 145 A.D.

*God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change;  
Courage to change the things I can;  
And wisdom to know the difference.*

If only it were that easy—trillions of life mistakes would be poofed away!

At least the prayer is calling attention to something a tremendous number of people seem unconscious of as they go about their daily business of telling others how to fix *their* daily business. The wisdom of 19 centuries ago applies to-day. Each individual has a very limited locus of control. *Very limited.* The genius of my insights aside, people are little interested in my plans for their lives. They fail to comply and I am hurt.

What is wrong with these people?

We can become so busy with our plans for others—spouses, children, bosses, coworkers, neighbors, in-laws and legislators—that we neglect to change the things we can. Epictetus also mentions freedom. We can become chained to our machinations for improving the lives of other people. Our motives are so pure that it is difficult to recognize that we have embarked on an ill-fated venture.

Let's move forward with more attention paid to the wisdom of Epictetus and Reverend Niebuhr.

Am I something of a control freak? Do I have great ideas for what other folks should be doing? Am I disappointed when my loving direction is ignored? How important is it that someone might load the dishwasher imperfectly?

### ***January 13 EVERYDAY HABITS THAT DRAIN OUR ENERGY***

- |                                 |                              |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Taking things too personally | 7. Having a poor diet        |
| 2. Taking things too personally | 8. Complaining all the time  |
| 3. Taking things too personally | 9. Overthinking              |
| 4. Over-stressing               | 10. Gossiping                |
| 5. Sleeping in late             | 11. Not living in the moment |
| 6. Fueling drama                | 12. Trying to please others  |

This is a list of classic mistakes. If one examines 5,000 inspirational quotes, there aren't 5,000 *different* pieces of advice. A relatively small number of kernels of wisdom appear again and again. Following the triple warning against taking things too personally, the list moves to a huge one for the excessively anxious! Sleeping late can be an effort to hide from the world. Over-stressing, fuelling drama and constantly complaining aren't big issues for me. We're all a bit different.

Overthinking, not living in the moment and trying to please others are failings for me. I'm not *big* on gossiping, but I can fall into it.

There are some physical elements on the list. In modern recovery, there's a lot of talk about caring for the body. I could be better regarding diet and exercise and I like sleeping in. In my experience, when I want to make some positive changes, I do best focusing on one, two, or three zones of improvement and monitoring myself for progress in these areas. Perhaps I can try to get a friend to join in the challenge. That raises the level of commitment and the accountability from checking in regularly is beneficial.

What energy drainers jump out at you? Are you currently working on changing any? Can you add to the list?

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The featured image at the top of this page can be found on this very new website, created by bob's niece, Cynthia: <https://bobk.ca/>.

And this is the biography she included:

Bob k has been a sober and active member of Alcoholics Anonymous since October 28, 1991. He is the son of an alcoholic who was the son of an alcoholic. Bob qualifies for Al Alon and Adult Children of Alcoholics and has been to meetings of those two societies. He has also visited Narcotics Anonymous, Cocaine Anonymous, and Food Addicts in Recovery.

From 2004-2006, Bob supplied articles on AA's "Big Book" to Toronto Intergroup's newsletter, [Better Times](#).

He has been a regular contributor to the websites [AAagnostic.org](#) and [AA Beyond Belief](#). Many of those essays were on the subject of AA history. In 2015, Bob published *Key Players in AA History*.

A second, expanded edition of that volume was released in 2023 as was *The Secret Diaries of Bill W.*, a fictional look at AA's founder. Bob has made presentations at AA history meetings and at conferences.

Coming soon is *Almost Hopeless : Pre-AA Efforts to Reform America's Alcoholics*.

Bob worked in sales for many years before a dramatic career change in 1990 to teaching golf. He was a respected member of the PGA of Canada for many years and had some successes, provincially and nationally, as a player. Whitby, just east of Toronto, is home.

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