

Lunch at Perkins

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I was having lunch at Perkins, talking about recovery with Lyle, John and Jenine. Among the many things we talked about was how to stay in recovery over a period of years. Sitting across the table from me were two men who had a combined total of very close to 70 years of sobriety. What a wonderful opportunity for me to tap into some program wisdom. A

common theme that kept coming up was reaching out to be of service to others and enjoying the fellowship and miracles that recovery offers.

I know that the Twelve Step programs are not for everyone and there are people who recover that do not go to meetings. That said, I also know with so many millions that have found recovery working the Twelve Step program that it is a very good place to start if you are looking for relief from the pain of addiction.

An interesting fact that came up was that not only does working the Twelve Steps help us through the pain of our addiction it also helps our loved ones through their pain caused by our addiction. And as a bonus of the twelve steps, we can use this knowledge to help us through separation from a loved one, dealing with sickness and a whole lot of other hurdles we all face in life. It will help us become better people all around. As the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous says on page 84 “we will intuitively know how to handle situations that used to baffle us”. There are promises in the Big Book pages 83-84 that tell us that “we are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness” and “We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace”. These promises have been coming true for millions of people for over eighty years. So they very well could come true for you.

Early in my recovery I was busy doing just what I was told to do by those who knew about recovery. Well almost everything. I was going to all the meetings, reading my daily meditations, praying, making amends, and doing a daily inventory. At about eighteen months into my recovery, I was on my way to a meeting in Albert Lea. I had the thought that my life was still way out of balance. True my life was better, but there still was an emptiness within me. Every day was much the same except for Sunday which was family day, a day set aside to be together and enjoy each other as a family. Sundays were wonderful and passed by way too quickly. As for the rest of the week, I would get up, read my meditation, go to work, come home and clean up, go to my meeting, come home, make my lunch, go to bed, and the next day was much the same.

So I decided that night on my way to an N.A. meeting I was going to cut back on my meetings and get more involved in the meeting I attended. Plus open up a few extra nights with the family. That

night I joined some members of the meeting that had been inviting me to Perkins for the last eighteen months. I got involved in the fellowship. That is when one of the many miracles I have experienced in recovery happened. I did go to fewer meetings, but I spent more time with people in recovery. I became a General Service Representative and attended area meetings, sometimes with my family. My meetings were no longer something I needed to do to stay sober; they were something I looked forward to going to. Although I knew from the start I belonged at those meetings I now felt I was a part of the meeting and it was a part of me. Joining in the fellowship allowed my friendship with others in recovery to grow. It became easier to reach out in times of need as well as be there for others.

The friendship that started in those early years is still strong today. By getting involved with the fellowship I realized that these people truly do care about me. That these people were much more like me than they were different, that I was not so unique and that I was still likable. They did not judge me and they were there to make my recovery easier and show me recovery is fun.

My involvement in the fellowship is not what it once was. That probably has to do with my age and the slower pace of my life. I enjoy being home and I have a list of projects I will never see the end of. But when I go to my meetings, I am no longer the last one to show up and the first one out the door. I enjoy the events that are taking place in the recovery community. And there are many local clubs and recovery organizations hosting fun events; breakfasts, suppers, holiday parties, dances, campouts, concerts, a talent contest, movie viewings, open mic nights, it is all going on. For me, they are all an opportunity for fellowship.

When we get involved in recovery we do more than make our recovery easier. We show the newcomers that recovery is fun. We demonstrate to society that we do recover from addiction and that we are real people leading productive lives. And most important to me is that I prove to that little addict voice in my head that I don't need drugs or alcohol to enjoy life and that I am not alone.

The meetings, readings, meditations, the steps and traditions are all important tools for my recovery. However, it is the support of my family, loved ones, and the fellowship that make recovery so priceless. We humans are social creatures and we need each other. It is the support of others that give us the will to keep going in our dark hours. And it is with others that we can experience the joy of life to the fullest.

So I encourage everyone to reach out to others and discover that joy shared is joy doubled.

– Stay Gold