

**SUNDAY CIRCLE – MARCH 3, 2024
MOTHER MARCIA DAVENPORT**

**FROM THE BIG BOOK OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS
Page 58 following: 'How it works'**

"Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path. Those who do not recover are people who cannot or will not completely give themselves to this simple program, usually men and women who are constitutionally incapable of being honest with themselves...They are naturally incapable of grasping and developing a manner of living which demands rigorous honesty."

" If you have decided you want what we have and are willing to go to any length to get it - then you are ready to take certain steps. At some of these we balked. We thought we could find an easier softer way. But we could not. With all the earnestness at our command, we beg of you to be fearless and thorough from the very start. Some of us have tried to hold on to our old ideas and the result was nil until we let go absolutely." Half measures availed us nothing. We stood at a turning point. We asked His protection and care with complete abandon."

"Here are the steps we took, which are suggested as a program of recovery:

1. We admitted we were powerless over _____ that our lives had become unmanageable."

"The first requirement is that we be convinced that any life run on self-will can hardly be a success. On that basis, we are always in collision with something or somebody, even though our motives are good. Most people try to live by self-propulsion. Each person is like an actor who wants to run the whole show; is forever trying to arrange the lights, the ballet, the scenery and the rest of the players in his own way. If only his arrangements would stay put, if only people would do as he wishes, the show would be great. Everybody, including himself, would be pleased. Life would be wonderful..."

"What usually happens? The show doesn't come off very well. He begins to think life doesn't treat him right. He decides to exert himself more. He becomes, on the next occasion still more demanding or more gracious...Still the play does not suit him...He is sure other people are to

blame. he becomes angry, indignant, and self-pitying. What is his basic trouble? Is he not really a self-seeker even when trying to be kind? Is he not the victim of the delusion that he can wrest satisfaction and happiness out of the world if he only manages well?...Our actor is self-centered.....Selfishness-self-centeredness! That, we think is the root of our troubles. Driven by a hundred forms of fear, self-delusion, self-seeking, and self-pity...So our troubles , we think, are basically of our own making. They arise out of ourselves, and the alcoholic/---addicted, is an extreme example of self-will run riot..."

"First, we had to stop playing God. It didn't work. Next, we had to decided that hereafter in this drama of life, God was going to be our Director."

ADDICTION AND GRACE: Gerry May

" I can honestly say, then, that it was my work with addicted people; and the consequent realization of my own addictive behavior, that brought me to my knees. I am glad. Grace was there. If my attachments had not caused me to fail miserably in controlling my life and work, I doubt I ever would have recovered the spiritual desire and the sense of God that had been so precious to me as a child.

Compared to what happens to people suffering from alcoholism or narcotic addiction, what happened to me may not seem much of a 'rock bottom'. But it had the same grace-full effect. To state it quite simply, I had tried to run my life on the basis of my own willpower alone. When my supply of success at this egotistic autonomy ran out, I became depressed. And with the depression, by means of grace, came a chance for spiritual openness." 10

"Addiction exists wherever persons are internally compelled to give energy to things that are not their true desires." "To define it directly, addiction is a state of compulsion, obsession, or preoccupation that enslaves a person's will and desire. Addiction side-tracks and eclipses the energy of our deepest, truest desire for love and goodness." 14

"Addiction is any compulsive, habitual behaviour that limits the freedom of human desire. It is caused by the attachment or nailing of desire to specific objects."

There are five essential characteristics that mark true addiction: tolerance, withdrawal symptoms, self-deception, loss of will-power, and distortion of attention. Story: Sally's Nose

"First, although God calls us all toward more perfect life, we cannot personally achieve the state of perfection. We can and should do our very best to move in that direction, struggling with every resource we have, but we must also accept the reality of our incompleteness. Second, we need to recognize that the incompleteness within us, our personal insufficiency does not make us unacceptable in God's eyes. Far from it, our incompleteness is the empty side of our longing for God and for love. It is what draws us toward God and one another...If we do not fill our minds with guilt...we will recognize our incompleteness as a kind of spaciousness into which we can welcome the flow of grace." 31

"We are meant to be free enough to really love God and one another, but true freedom can happen only if we completely trust God...if we completely trust in God's ultimate care for us. And to really trust God, we must begin to relax our grip and ease our concern about all the lesser sources of security to which we have become attached." 32

Questions:

Looking at Gerry May's five characteristics of addictive behaviours, can you apply these to some behaviours in your own life?

How far do you really trust God's care and love for you in your daily life? Or, do you 'turn it over' and then, 'take it back'?

Do you have withdrawal symptoms from any substances, behaviours?