

Five-Year Coin Acceptance Speech

by Mark David Baum

Given at the Saturday Morning Eye Openers Meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous
Our Lady of Perpetual Help Meeting Hall, Natrona Heights, PA
October 25, 2008

Hello. Thanks. Thanks a lot!

My name is Mark and I am the Treasurer of the Saturday Morning Eye Openers meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous. And compared to last year when I received my four-year coin one of the changes I've noticed is that my stagefright has subsided. So now, without that fear, I find it easier to practice rigorous honesty and be up front about it. I can do that simply by being myself without the need of working myself up into a frenzy for the sake of molding myself to others' nonsensical opinions. I only have a limited amount of time and energy in life in general so why waste it on such unnecessary stuff in the name of normalcy?

I don't give credit to A.A. for any of that for that would simply sell myself short. I take full credit and responsibility for my own actions both now and in the future. As for my self-seeking and the deluded hope that it will slip away, gosh I hope not.

Certainly, with y'all who have a higher power on your side, you certainly can handle a couple observations from a mere mortal. With such a power on your side I would find it laughable to find it's not me that is filled with fear but the True Believers who are. If anything I can't help but laugh at that ironic absurdity. Laughter and humor to me, especially stuff that focuses on such absurdities, are very entertaining and, when compared to hate, is infinitely more enjoyable and fun to share with others.

So, with rigorous honesty in mind, I have to ask in all seriousness in regards to matters of life and death, for the love of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness: Is hate a spiritual value? The reason why I ask is not for the sake of divisiveness but honest human curiosity, compassion, dignity and moral human decency.

I'll be honest about myself: I have never worked the Steps further since the Second Step with my first sponsor, Richard Iozzi, in the Spring of 2004, no longer have a sponsor at this time and don't believe in the wasted writings of William Griffith Wilson anymore. And, just as with drinking, I have no desire at all to do any of that. And the reason is simple: I never drink. Not now and never in the future. And that's all anyone needs to do when their own drinking or drug habit, much less their own hatred, becomes a problem. That simplifies matters significantly and means less to worry about now and in the future.

I can say that because it's true and I'm living proof of that truth. And a foundation of living life built of true things based in reality rather than the fragile house of cards built of lies, fantasy, ignorance and deception is by far easier to remember and to live by. And I'd never wish for the demise of my fellow human beings to a bad habit that can be cured simply through abstinence alone. I just couldn't have that on my conscience.

So that begs the question: Why did William Griffith Wilson suggest to others who carry any doubt about Alcoholics Anonymous to drink more as quoted on pages 31 and 32 of the Big Book and within the First Step essay within the 12x12?

The answer is quite simple: He was a very thin-skinned individual who couldn't accept any type of constructive criticism, criticism he perceived as blasphemy, in regards to his own beliefs. If you don't believe me please explain to me the Third

Tradition essay within the 12x12, at how he wished for someone who he believed to speaking against his god, wishing for that person to get drunk and then, afterwards, he and his cronies kicked out of A.A.

And that person, named Ed within that essay, I doubt was an atheist. For Wilson regarded anyone who didn't share his identical arrogant fundamentalist views on god as an agnostic or atheist. Likewise, without that fear of drinking and the world outside the rooms there's no reason for any further disciples to be absorbed into the Fellowship of A.A. So it's that fear that is deliberately instilled by A.A.'s own True Believers.

Yeah. A.A.: The Fellowship of Fear. And without that fear A.A. and it's True Believers has no method of controlling its flock of sheep and to keep them coming back. That fear is spread by these followers in the form of a myth: An imaginary disease that is, in reality, an iatrogenic hypochondria spread by True Believers who proudly call themselves Real Alcoholics. As you can see I don't consider myself a True Believer and have no need to euphemize that with further jargon to appease others for the sake of A.A.'s "secret handshake" membership requirement.

In the Big Book, Wilson is quoted as stating on page 66 that, "...to drink is to die." That raises a huge question: How can anyone be respected who wishes for the death of another human being? Yeah. For anyone to say, "Go back out and drink some more." is the sinister equivalent of, "Get out of A.A. and die!" And with friends like that, who needs enemies? Thanks but no thanks. I can choose my own friends who are, by far, more ethical, loving and caring than those who resort to issuing death threats.

It's ironic that in light of that how within Chapter Four of the Big Book how Wilson claims that nonbelievers in his own beliefs of god are violently against religion. As someone who doesn't share Wilson's beliefs I don't care what others believe just as long as they don't wish for harm to come to others or even deliberately harm those who just think differently or live by their own moral code. I find the Hippocratic Oath, something that I live by, much more life-affirming than Wilson's harmful suggestions and pronouncements. It's an oath which is neither found nor mentioned within the Big Book. But I have that evidence stated right now that it was Wilson who was projecting his own hate onto that straw man that he labels as "agnostics", "atheists" or some other slur. And it's far easier for such a petty tyrant, a bully, to attack a defenseless straw man rather than ask someone who isn't a member of A.A., much less any nonbeliever, non-Christian, teetotaler, or any other human being what they believe, much less get to know them in general. It's as though they're afraid of having their own false, mistaken beliefs proven wrong.

A couple more questions: If the Steps are a quit drinking program, where's the Step that says "Don't drink"? Or, if A.A. claims to be for abstinence and claims to be a quit-drinking program, why is it that they talked someone out of quitting drinking as quoted in pages 39 through 43, "The Story of Fred", within the Big Book? Certainly such a divinely-inspired program based in rigorous honesty would be for quitting drinking and mention that outright. But it isn't and it doesn't. And I'm sure that's not a coincidence when, in light of A.A.'s often-parroted primary purpose, no one bothers to read and quote A.A.'s Real Purpose as stated on page 77 within the Big Book. And I can guarantee you, it has nothing at all to do with abstaining from drinking. And a lie, even when mindlessly parroted by millions over and over again like any other thought-terminating cliché or slogan, is still a lie.

But don't take my words for it. You all have access to the Big Book and the 12x12 right over there on that table. I can sell you copies if you need 'em! See for yourself! I did and that is some repugnant stuff!

And if this deception is being done in god's name it's not me who has tarnished that but the True Believers who have. Why would I even follow such violent and dishonest nonsense and the True Believers who practice that in god's name? It's morally repugnant. It is just simply wrong. And, compared to how I was five years ago, at least I took that step in no longer remaining a quivering asskissing coward on my knees and taking that moral hit, rising and transcending above such nonsense by standing up upon my own two feet to openly denounce that today.

So I consider that the lesser of two evils just as much as I see the clear cut difference between choosing between being castrated in the name of cowardly and slavish devotion and faith versus taking that knee to the 'nads for the sake of taking that courageous stance against injustice and evil itself. The difference is that I can walk off that sting after taking that swift kick to the groin knowing full well that I still have my balls afterwards. And balls is what it takes to courageously stand up for what's right.

If anyone has a problem with that, for me to stand up for who I am and to shine the light on injustice against those who secretly or openly wish for my return to drinking in the hope for a quick demise, I have news for you. Drinking for the rest of my life is not even an option. All I have have is that self-knowledge. And it's through that self-knowledge that I know where that road leads. And if y'all have a drinking problem and have suffered because of it and are still unsure if you are going to continue then you haven't learned anything. The real first step would be to trust yourself and your own painfully-gained knowledge concerning where your experiences with problem drinking led you. No one else can do that but you and I'm confident you can make that decision on your own. You don't need a lot of intelligence to realize that but only a little bit with those facts in mind.

And it's okay to abstain in spite of A.A. and the pronouncements of Wilson and his sycophantic fear-filled True Believers. At least the newcomers have my support in light of that. And they're the reason why I show up to do my job at this meeting every week and keep coming back. I find genuine reward in that. Recovering from ones' own past mistakes is not a competition so I really don't need to brag. It's just self-evident and people respect that authentic display of inner strength. It's through our own mistakes and the chances that we take that we learn.

If no one else will do that then who will? And, if A.A. were to go the way of the dodo, at least I'll still remain a teetotaler. For anyone to be against that has by far more serious problems than their own drinking problem. And it's best not to seek out such bad company, much less trust anyone who covers for such deeply deluded, fearful, and potentially harmful people.

Such cowardly actions, to remain silent and to intimidate people into remaining silent, is just plain evil. To speak out, to cast a light upon injustice, to bring it to light, is a cure against that disease of darkness known as evil. And evil is something I can never tolerate. Not now. Not ever again. So while I'm tolerant of many people, places and things in life I am greatly intolerant towards hate-filled people who do evil, wicked things. Especially when they do destructive things in the name of their god or gods.

One fun fact: Would you believe that my girlfriend is a Christian? I've opened up totally to her and, despite that one difference, she loves me for who I am. And that to me is very flattering and life-affirming. Dare I say that it's proof that love conquers all. That is true genuine unconditional love and makes the conditional love as practiced by A.A. and its True Believers a pale counterfeit by comparison.

Even my coworkers and bosses know about who I am and what I do and certainly know about the many times I've worked within a hangover. I've also opened up to them

about my other hobbies and activities as well. The surprise I've found is that they have more respect for me now since they know how I've changed from being a stinky drunk to a dry, downright arid yet warm, open and compassionate human being. And yet my girlfriend and I don't drink either. Who would've thought about the thousands of ways in this life how one can have fun without booze!

The moral: Anyone can learn to adapt to living without such harmful stuff, whether drinking booze and taking other recreational drugs, getting off on hatred or even A.A.'s insipid dogma and its counterfeit spirituality. It's not easy to begin with but, just as with first riding a bike or learning how to swim, it becomes second nature and effortless in a very short period of time.

I'm simply a nondrinking guy who was wrong about A.A. five years ago, a former True Believer, and I'm a decent human being who's having lots of fun in my life right now, especially when living an honest life. I talk the talk and walk the walk. Someone has to because A.A. and its True Believers sure as hell won't just as surely as A.A. won't govern and hold others accountable within its own Fellowship for their own hate-filled malicious actions. Such people do not deserve anonymity.

My name is Mark David Baum, living not for one day at a time but for one LIFETIME at a time, and I approve this message. Have a great meeting!

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