

# The Eye pener

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Your Experience, Strength, and Hope via the Written Word

## A Higher Power Can

**“As it turns out,** feeling a rush of relief after even the smallest amount of alcohol isn’t a common experience for a normal drinker. Apparently, neither is drinking alone on a Tuesday afternoon after a long day of high school. As it turns out, normal drinkers don’t have to close one eye to see straight every time they drink. Apparently, normal drinkers don’t think about alcohol every waking minute until they can finally take that drink and find relief - and then take the next drink. Apparently normal drinkers don’t need the second drink as much as they need the first one. Apparently they don’t need the first one at all. I did.

Alcohol was my whole life. It worked until it didn’t, but by the time it didn’t, it had me drinking every day. And when I wasn’t drinking, I was thinking about drinking. I got sick of it. Alcohol calmed my ever-churning mind that advertised me (to myself) as simultaneously better and worse than everyone around me. I loved and hated alcohol, and by the end, my brain couldn’t figure out whether I wanted to be drinking or not. I am not even sure I really intended on getting sober. But somehow, I did.

Two years ago, at age 20, I got sober in AA. For someone who always wanted to fit in, AA was the last place I wanted to belong, but I related thoroughly to what people around me were saying. They told me to

go to a meeting tomorrow, to find someone who has something I want and ask them to be my sponsor, to work the 12 steps because it worked for them, to identify with people’s stories and not compare, and to keep my mind open to the idea that if a power greater than myself could keep them sober, it might be able to help me too. So, I did.

Kind of.

The first bit was rough. I went to 90 meetings in 90 days (then 180 in 180), and I still wanted to drink every day for those first 6 or so months. I took the suggestions my sponsor gave me to the best of my ability and worked the first of my steps diligently. I gave my will and my life over to the care of a higher power bit by bit (commitment issues). I also tried to find any reason why I didn’t belong in AA. The obsession with drinking still had me. Until, one day, it didn’t.

I hadn’t removed that obsession.

God did.

Whoever god is. I thank them every day for the full life I have. For my friends in AA, my rejuvenated outlook on life, freedom from the obsession and compulsion to drink, the ability to grow slowly but surely every day, and to be helpful in the process. Life ain’t always peaches and cream, but sometimes it is!!!!

*~Emily T.*

Off the Wall

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THEY DO NOT REFLECT THE OPINIONS OR POSITIONS OF THE MEMBERS OF THE EYE OPENER COMMITTEE OR A.A. AS A WHOLE.

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## Are You New Here?

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**“Are you** new here?” I didn’t want to look up from my phone. I noticed a man maybe a few years older than me begin to approach. I quietly told him yes and realized I was standing in the walkway to which I later learned was the entrance to the church basement. I was embarrassed yet relieved he had approached me and wondered how he could tell I was new.

This was my first meeting. I had been discharged from an inpatient stay a few days prior.

It took me those few days to work up the courage to make it to that meeting. I referenced a printout the woman who worked at the detox facility had given me. She had highlighted Burlington Young People and told me it was a popular meeting.

I walked into the meeting, my breathing shallow, hands clenched, avoiding eye contact. I immediately noticed that the chairperson was the same woman from the detox facility. I instantly felt tension release from my body. I don’t

remember much from that meeting. I do remember how I felt. I do remember that I sat next to a woman who told me that she was also new. That woman ended up becoming my best friend. Most of all, I remember the way other young women approached me and gave me hugs and their phone numbers. I left the meeting with a smile on my face for the first time in weeks. I will always remember feeling welcomed, cared for, and a sense of belonging for the first time in my life. (p. 3)

### Full Area Assembly

**Saturday, June 8, 2024**

9 am-4 pm | Hosted by District 3

United Community Church

1325 Main St.

St. Johnsbury, VT 05819



Please visit us at [www.burlingtonaa.org](http://www.burlingtonaa.org) for more

local stories and meeting information.

Nearly a year and nine months later, I reflect back on that time with a sense of gratitude and a bucket full of self-compassion. I wanted to feel okay. I didn't want to be in pain anymore. I didn't want to die, and I did not want to pick up a drink. The problem was I didn't know how to do any of that. When I walked out of the doors of the detox facility, I knew that left to my own devices I would drink again.

Slowly but surely, Alcoholics Anonymous taught me how to live. I listened to others share at meetings, and I held onto their every word. I got a sponsor, went to meetings every

day, got a home group, and started working the steps.

It felt at the time that I didn't really know what I was doing. That was okay. I wasn't going to be a spiritual guru and have an analytic understanding of the 12 steps. I did the steps anyway. With the guidance of my sponsor, who put my hand into the hands of a higher power, my life changed.

If I could tell anything to that version of myself at my first meeting, I would say that she's going to be okay and that she will know happiness and peace. I'd also tell her to soak it in because she's the

most important person in the room.

Alcoholics Anonymous has changed my life and has provided me with a design for living that I thought only alcohol could give me. I didn't know it at the time, but God was working in my life long before I was aware and led me to that meeting where I met my best friend, a community of people I had always longed for, and a solution.

~Cait

Off the Wall

## Off the Wall

### Open ~ All Are Welcome

Tuesday, 8:00 p.m. | Discussion

First United Methodist Church

21 Buell St., Burlington

Wheelchair Accessible

Thursday, 8:00 p.m. | Step Mtg.

Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86256859799?pwd=WUJWM0hsQ2R1MlZCcUhnS2N5alFHUT09>

**Download or print the AA Vermont Districts  
2 & 11 [meeting list](#).**

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# My Life Looks A Lot Different Now

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**My sobriety date** is March 10th, 2019, and it still surprises me that I am sober. I had so many rules and contingencies on why I wasn't an alcoholic, which included:

- I was too young (24 years old)
- I didn't drink every day
- I didn't have huge consequences
- I had a twin who didn't have an alcohol problem

None of these ended up being true for me. I was definitely not the youngest person in AA when I arrived.

There were people younger than me who got sober years ago, and there were young people getting sober with me. I may not have drunk every day, but I was an alcoholic every day. When doctors asked me to fill out a form of how much I drank a week, I couldn't figure it out. When I drank, I always blacked out and binged. My thinking has always been alcoholic. I absolutely had consequences, but I couldn't recognize them for what they were. I was arrested at 19 and was mailed misdemeanors at 23.

My last day drinking involved crashing my van and totaling it, but I continued to overlook these consequences until my lawyer really started asking me questions about my drinking. After that day, I haven't picked up a drink, and my life looks a lot different now.

I stopped drinking and came into AA many months later (which I do not recommend). Once I finally came in, I started working the program, got a sponsor, made friends, and fellowshiped after meetings. My entire community here is primarily AA people, who I can call and talk honestly with at any time. My life is

filled with so many gifts. I am so incredibly grateful that I am sober and can experience them. Last summer, I got married to my husband, who saw all versions of me over the past 7 years. I was sober for my wedding, which is a miracle in itself. I never thought I would get married, and I never thought I was interested in having kids. As I started to love myself for who I am, my perspective on these changed. I am hoping to start a family in the near future.

And my twin! She is now sober, and we talk about sobriety and our experiences with the rollercoaster of life. My dad is also not drinking. My inner circle continues to change and grow. It would be untrue of me to say that sobriety has been easy, but what I can say is that I continue to grow, and I remember what it was like to not grow. I continue to work on myself, build community, and challenge myself to love myself unconditionally. When I'm having a hard day, I try to remember all the gifts I have, including all the people who love me, my love of the world around me, and my growth over the years.



Thank you for keeping me sober for one more day!

~Sydney

Step Sisters

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## Eye Opener Committee

*Districts 2 & 11 Vermont*

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