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Gratitude In my Attitude

How I found my way into the rooms of AA & The Stoics

I had no idea what gratitude was let alone how it worked I actually never heard the word Gratitude or Grateful until I came in the rooms, what I can say is I was a kinda glass half full type until my alcoholism kicked in to high gear then I was a no glass type. I grew up in an average household in NYC in the 1970's money was tight, religion was there not forced, and the adults seemed to be happy and having fun, dinking was the way I saw they had fun and were happy. My first and fondest memory of alcohol and its effects was when I was 10 or 11, I come from an Italian background and making wine was yearly event in which I look forward to. My grandparents would come over, we would start by crushing the grapes, laughing having fun. In 3-4 days an aroma would waft up from the barrels in the garage and when I churned the crushing it would hit my lungs and a light headedness would happened that I liked, it was one of my chores that I was never late for or minded doing Hmm winder why? After after 7-10 days the sugar is converting to alcohol and it was my job to scrape out the crushing of the barrel after we took juice out. My father and grandfather would put the barrel on it side so I could reach inside and scoop out the crushing the alcohol fumes are much stronger now I would be in the barrel up to my waist the air inside the barrel would hit my lungs and it was beyond light headedness imagine a huge vat of (Rush/locker room) the effervescence would fill my lungs and I would get a feeling/sensation that I would chase until I made it into the rooms.

Not to boar you with a drunk-a-log this is my last drunk there is plenty of debauchery, FEAR, pain, misery, shame, guilt in between, My consequences from drinking Divorce,

My last drunk was 10/07/13 a boys night out I was attempting to prove to myself that I can handle my drinking like the other guys so I took a cab so I didn't have to worry about driving, and made it home with no consequences to speak of. I was sitting in my La-Z-Boy in my Tightly whiteys, you see I'm divorced so when my phone rang it was the women that I was dating at that time, that's the last thing I remember, apparently I thought it was a good idea to get in my car and drive over to her place she lives 20 miles from me, her exit is a Cloverleaf and I could not get off the highway I kept on getting on and off and ran out of gas, she found me on the side of the road and brought me to her place. When I woke up I was informed of what happened we went to the gas station fill up a gas can the I got to my car I saw that the drivers side mirror had be sheered off shit I must of hit something. When I got home that day I assumed the Oh shit position my head in my hands looking down at the ground, I knew I had a problem & didn't know what to do. I knew nothing about AA or recovery, the cosmos was working in my life couple months before a friend 12 step me, he gave me a book

called the book of goal the Golden Book of Resentments I never looked at it till that day. I read step one and said that will do it, I white knuckled it for 3 months, nothing got better fear & sham and the thought of a drink ran though my head constantly. After a conversation & suggestion of a friend I did not know was in AA that kinda went like this "I don't drink anymore. I don't drink either hmm what meetings do you go to? What do you mean meetings? Oh my, You don't go to meetings? Do you think you might want to go to one? I said ok, I would try anything at this point to feel better. I called my friend who 12th step me and said it was suggested that I go to a meeting he said I think that's a good idea and took me. At my first meeting I raise my hand to say my name is Frank I'm an alcoholic I cried & I felt a sense of relief the obsession to drink lifted and something had shifted what.

I went meetings, got a sponsor who took me through the steps using the BB & the 12 & 12. As I tried to enhance my spirituality my childhood faith did not help me here. I found out later in life that I was born with 1 kidney, which lead me to the belief I was inadequate and not the same as everyone else, I felt abandoned by everyone including the god of my child hood. When the Dr informed me about my kidney he told to take care of it, what did I do just what the BB describes as the alcoholic I could not moderate or stop my drinking giving a good reason, I made this realization early in my sobriety it gave me the acceptance of being a Alcoholic and the drive I needed to dive into AA.

As I looked to enhance my spirituality I found the Stoics, the forward of the 12 & 12 states that the basic AA principals were borrowed from Religion and medicine with that I found some old quotes and everything changed they fell inline with the basic principals of AA, as I found out they also mentioned god.

This one got me Resentment, bitterness, and holding a grudge prevent us from seeing and hearing and tasting and delighting." Marcus Aurelius So I looked up the Marcus Aurelius and learned he was Emperor of Rome and the words Stoic Philosopher appeared next to his name. I then looked up the Stoic Philosophy as I researched the stoics I found it the the stoics are pantheist which is 1. A doctrine that identifies God as part of the universe or the universe is a manifestation of God 2. Worship that admits or tolerate all gods, that hit me and reminded me when Ebby told Bill in the kitchen why not choose your own conception of god or when Bill uses the word cosmos or universe throughout the book.

When I read the quote from Marcus Aurelius on Resentment I realized the BB has a whole chapter on them and on them on pg 64 is the statement "Resentment is the "number one" offender. It destroys more alcoholics than anything else. " I had plenty of Resentments and realized they were holding me back and destroying me.

On my spirituality joinery I realized when I read the BB or the 12 & 12 it was reinforced by the Stoic quotes, or a new Stoic quote would suddenly come to life in the BB.

See Examples

“Such as are your habitual thoughts, such also will be the character of your mind; for the soul is dyed by the thoughts.”

Marcus Aurelius

Brought me right to the BB pg 23 There is a solution

“Therefore, the main problem of the alcoholic centers in his mind, rather than in his body.” My mind & body were very sick I now understand.

When I read “Stoicism and the Art of Happiness - Ancient Tips For Modern Challenges: Teach Yourself.” By Donald Robertson

This book explained Stoicism in the way the BB explained how to recover from alcoholism so I kept going forward with my AA and Stoic schooling I read books I took courses I learned that the Stoics have what they call Healthy Passions and Unhealthy Passions see diagrams below.

I’ve come to learn that I control very little in my life here are some Stoic principals that I use in my AA program, 1st is Gratitude I look for gratitude in everything that happens good or bad, Marcus Aurelius and the Stoics have many different views on gratitude including Amor Fati translated Love of ones fate, or the Stoic Caveat Reserve Claus meaning “Fate Permitting” comes in very handy.

The BB pg 53 tells me that the gratitude I have for my new found belief is correct and this quote reminds me to keep gratitude in my attitude.

“Gratitude is not only the greatest of all virtues, but the parent of all the others.”

Marcus Tullius Cicero

AA has keeping your side of the street clean or doing the next right thing. The Stoics have what is called the “reasoned thought or mind” and make huge emphasis on humility, Marcus Aurelius wrote a journal to himself called the Meditations while he was emperor of Rome they speak to his humility.

“Persuade me or prove to me that I am mistaken in thought or deed, and I will gladly change-for it is the truth I seek , and the truth never harmed anyone. Harm comes from persisting in error and clinging to ignorance.”

Marcus Aurelius

In the mind of a disciplined and pure man, you will find no sign of infection, no running sores, no wounds that have not healed. It will not be this man's fate to quit life unfulfilled like the actor who fails to complete his lines and walks offstage before the play is ended. What is more, there is nothing obsequious or conceited about him; he neither depends on others nor is afraid to ask for help; he answers to no man for who he is and for what he does, yet he hides nothing.

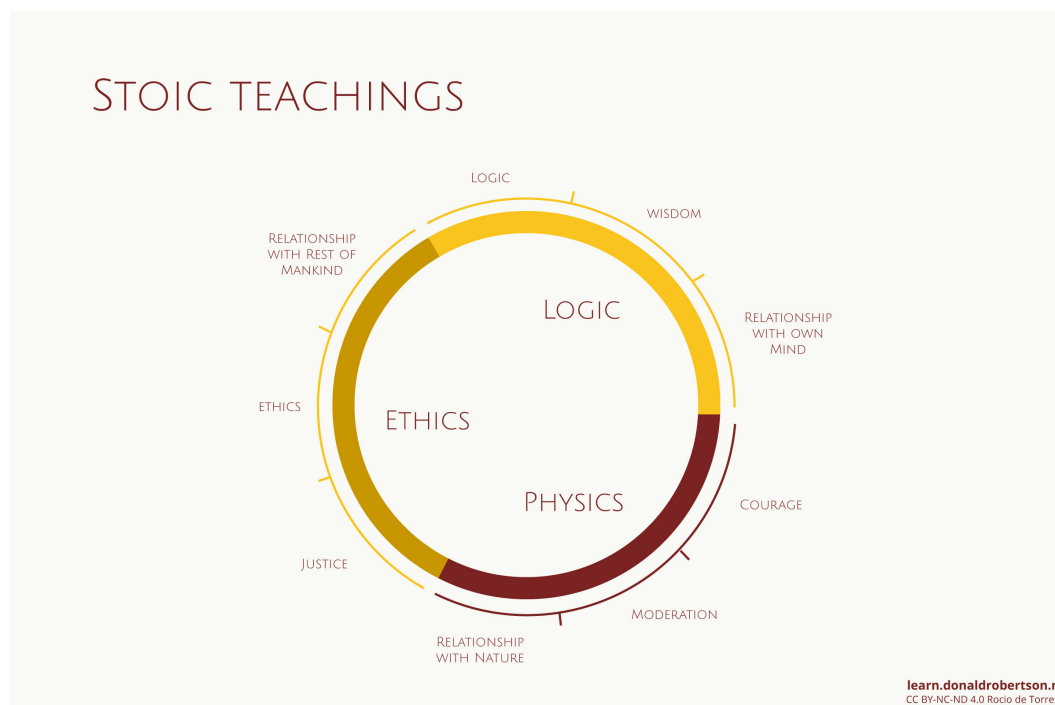
Marcus Aurelius

Let your face shine with simplicity, modesty and indifference to whatever is neither virtue nor vice. Love your fellow man. Walk with God. "All things are governed by laws" said Democritus. It is enough to remember that there are but two laws: the moral laws of the gods and the physical laws of the atoms. These two are sufficient.

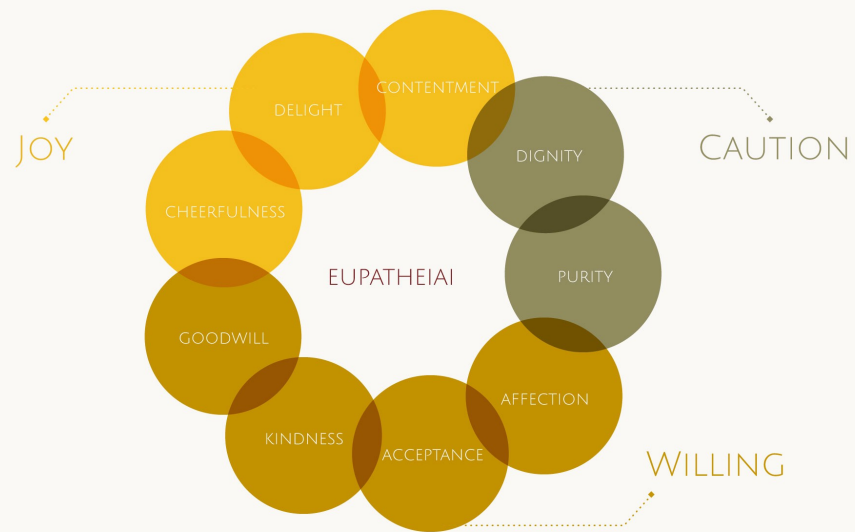
Marcus Aurelius
Meditations

AA brought me Gratitude, restored my relationship with MY HP and put me on the path of being Happy Joyous and free!!!

Frank I a very grateful Alcoholic



HEALTHY PASSIONS



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