

## Emotional Sobriety: The Next Step in Your Development



**The Monk** - Herb Kaighan and **The Marine** - Allen Berger, Ph.D.

*“Expectations lead to the **erosion** of any relationship. The myth that the resolution of loneliness will result because we have found an intimate one-on-one relationship is a cop out. It begins a **toxic process** which dissipates the **mutual nourishment** that occurs when both people are **committed to sustaining nourishing interaction and growth of their separate selves.**”*

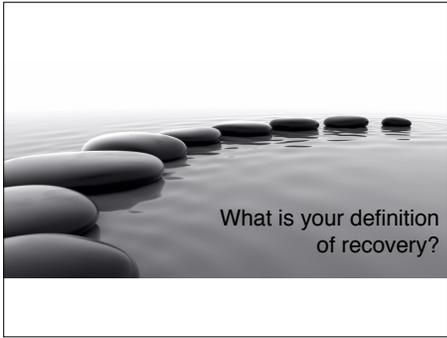
Dr. Jerry Greenwald (1980). Breaking Out of Loneliness. Simon & Shuster: NY.

### Session 1 Introduction to the Basic Concept of Emotional Sobriety



Earnie Larsen

*“Your program cannot take you further than your **definition** of recovery.”*



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## Stages of Recovery

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## Stage I

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*Earnie described Stage One Recovery as breaking the hold of our primary addiction.*



Earnie Larsen

*"Abstinence may get you out of a bad place, but getting out of a bad place just gets you out; it is not the same as getting to a good place (p.10)."*

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## Stage II

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*Emotional sobriety is the cure for **sober suffering**.*



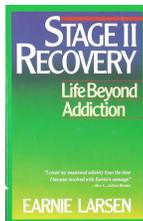
Fred Holmquist - The Lodge at Hazelden

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*Stage II Recovery was first discussed in 1985 by Earnie Larsen in the book he wrote entitled, Stage II Recovery.*

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*Earnie described Stage Two Recovery as "...rebuilding of the life that was saved in Stage One."*



Earnie Larsen

*"...Stage II Recovery gets at the underlying **patterns and habits that caused us trouble in the first place**. And if nothing changes, then nothing changes...the same results will pop up through our whole life (p. 83)."*

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Earnie Larsen

"I believe that **learning to make relationships work** is at the **core** of full recovery (p. 15)."

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Earnie Larsen

"Victims of dry drunks have made a First Step relative to their addiction, but have not made a First Step relative to the **living problems that underlies all addictions and ultimately limits their ability to function in loving relationships.**"

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Stage II Recovery is **contingent on emotional sobriety.**



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Dr. Nathaniel Brandon

"Self-responsibility begins with the recognition that I am ultimately responsible for my own existence; that no one else is here on earth to serve me, to take care of me, or fill my needs."

Nathaniel Brandon (1996) Taking Responsibility.

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**The Essence of Emotional Sobriety**

*"There's a **space** between the Stimulus and our Response. In that space **is our power to choose our response**. In our response **lies our growth and our freedom - try to live there.**"*

Viktor Frankl, M.D.



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*"...**maturing** is the **transcendence** from environmental support to **self-support**. (p.28). "*

Fritz Perls (1969). Gestalt Therapy Verbatim.



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**The Shift in the Location of the Emotional Center of Gravity in Emotional Sobriety**



I'm OK #ven.if ...? ...?

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*"Our **dependency** makes **slaves out of us**, especially if this dependency is a **dependency of our self-esteem**. If you need encouragement, praise, pats on the back from everybody, then you make everybody your **judge**."*



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## A Possible Definition of Emotional Sobriety

*"Emotional Sobriety is when the best in you does the thinking and talking for all of you.*

*This state of mind is achieved when what you do becomes the determining force in your emotional well being rather than allowing your emotional well being to be overly influenced by external events or by what others are or are not doing."*

Allen Berger, Ph.D. - 2016

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## S Space Between the Stimulus and the Response Emotional Sobriety Lives Here R

- Autonomy
- Individuality
- Holding on to Yourself
- Soothing and Supporting Yourself
- Keeping a Physical, Emotional and Spiritual Balance
- Maintaining Your Emotional Center of Gravity
- Validating Yourself
- Having Flexibility in your Response-Ability
- Letting the Best of You Run the Show

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*"If our **freedom depends exclusively on another person allowing it, we loses** our own sense of the **part we must exercise in protecting and defining our own psychological space...***"



Erving and Miriam Polster, Ph.D.  
Gestalt Therapy Integrated: Contours  
of Theory and Practice (1973).

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We change when we learn from our experience. Learning is the discovery of new possibilities.

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**Session2**  
**Unpacking Bill's Letter**

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**Bill's Letter in 1956**

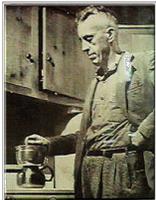
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**Emotional Sobriety: The Next  
Frontier by Bill Wilson (January -  
1958)**



I think many oldsters who have put our 'booze cure' to severe but successful tests still find they often lack emotional sobriety. Perhaps they will be the spear head for the next major development in AA, the development of much more real maturity and balance (which is to say, humility) in our relations with ourselves, with our fellows, and with God.

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**Emotional Sobriety: The Next  
Frontier by Bill Wilson (1958)**

Those adolescent urges that so many of us have for top approval, perfect security, and perfect romance, urges quite appropriate to age seventeen, prove to be an impossible way of life when we are at age forty-seven and fifty seven.

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**Emotional Sobriety: The Next Frontier by Bill Wilson (1958)**

Since AA began, I've taken immense wallops in all these areas because of my failure to grow up emotionally and spiritually. My God, how painful it is to keep demanding the impossible, and how very painful to discover, finally, that all along we had the cart before the horse. Then comes the final agony of seeing how awfully wrong we have been, but still finding ourselves unable to get off the emotional merry-go-round.

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**Emotional Sobriety: The Next Frontier by Bill Wilson (1958)**

How to translate a right mental conviction into a right emotional result, and so into easy, happy and good living. Well, that's not only the neurotics problem, it's the problem of life itself for all of us who have got to the point of real willingness to hew to right principles in all of our affairs.

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**Emotional Sobriety: The Next Frontier by Bill Wilson (1958)**

Even then, as we hew away, peace and joy may still elude us. That's the place so many AA oldsters have come to. And it's a hell of a spot, literally. How shall our unconscious, from which so many of our fears, compulsions and phony aspirations still stream, be brought into line with what we actually believe, know and want! How to convince our dumb, raging and hidden Mr. Hyde becomes our main task.

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**Emotional Sobriety: The Next Frontier by Bill Wilson (1958)**

I've recently come to believe that this can be achieved. I believe so because I begin to see many benighted ones, folks like you and me, commencing to get results.

Last autumn, depression, having no really rational cause at all, almost took me to the cleaners. I began to be scared that I was in for another long chronic spell. Considering the grief I've had with depressions, it wasn't a bright prospect.

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**Emotional Sobriety: The Next Frontier by Bill Wilson (1958)**

I kept asking myself, 'Why can't the Twelve Steps work to release depression?' By the hour, I stared at the St. Francis Prayer ... 'it's better to comfort than to be comforted.' Here was the formula all right, but why didn't it work?

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**Emotional Sobriety: The Next Frontier by Bill Wilson (1958)**

Suddenly, I realized what the matter was. My basic flaw had always been dependence, almost absolute dependence, on people or circumstances to supply me with prestige, security, and the like. Failing to get these things according to my perfectionist dreams and specifications, I had fought for them. And when defeat came, so did my depression.

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**Emotional Sobriety: The Next Frontier by Bill Wilson (1958)**

There wasn't a chance of making the outgoing love of St. Francis a workable and joyous way of life until these fatal and almost absolute dependencies were cut away.

Because I had over the years undergone a little spiritual development, the absolute quality of these frightful dependencies had never before been so starkly revealed.

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**Emotional Sobriety: The Next Frontier by Bill Wilson (1958)**

Reinforced by what grace I could secure in prayer, I found I had to exert every ounce of will and action to cut off these faulty emotional dependencies upon people, upon AA, indeed upon any act or circumstance whatsoever.

Then could I be free to love as Francis did. Emotional and instinctual satisfactions, I saw, were really the extra dividends of having love, offering love, and expressing love appropriate to each relation of life.

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**Emotional Sobriety: The Next Frontier by Bill Wilson (1958)**

Plainly, I could not avail myself to God's love until I was able to offer it back to Him by loving others as He would have me. And I couldn't possibly do that so long as I was victimized by false dependencies.

For my dependencies meant demand, a demand for the possession and control of the people and the conditions surrounding me. While those words 'absolute dependence' may look like a gimmick, they were the ones that helped to trigger my release into my present degree of stability and quietness of mind, qualities which I am now trying to consolidate by offering love to others regardless of the return to me.

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**Emotional Sobriety: The Next Frontier by Bill Wilson (1958)**

This seems to be the primary healing circuit: an outgoing love of God's creation and His people, by means of which we avail ourselves of His love for us. It is most clear that the real current can't flow until our paralyzing dependencies are broken, and broken at depth. Only then can we possibly have a glimmer of what adult love really is.

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**Emotional Sobriety: The Next Frontier by Bill Wilson (1958)**

..... If we examine every disturbance we have, great or small, we will find at the root of it some unhealthy dependence and its consequent demand. Let us, with God's help, continually surrender these hobbling demands. Then we can be set free to live and love: we may then be able to gain emotional sobriety.

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**Emotional Sobriety: The Next Frontier by Bill Wilson (1958)**

Of course I haven't offered you a really new idea only a gimmick that has started to unhook several of my own "hexes" at depth. Nowadays, my brain no longer races compulsively in either elation, grandiosity, or depression. I have been given a quiet place in bright sunshine."

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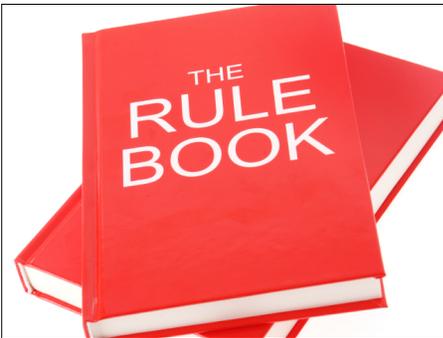
Session 3  
Emotional Sobriety and  
Relationships

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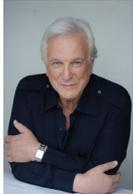
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*"In my emotional impoverishment, I tend to see other people essentially as **sources of approval or disapproval**. I do not appreciate them for who they are in their own right. I see only **what they can or cannot do for me.**"*



Dr. Nathaniel Branden

Nathaniel Branden (1994) - The Six Pillars of Self-Esteem

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*"If you are not eternally showing me that you live for me, then I feel like I am **nothing.**"*

Virginia Satir, PeopleMaking

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*"One of the truly basic problems is that our society bases the marital relationship almost completely on love and then imposes demands on it that love can never solely fulfill.*

***If you love me you won't do anything without me.***

***If you love me you'll do what I say.***

***If you love me you'll give me what I want.***

***If you love me you'll know what I want before I ask.***

*These kinds of practices soon make love into a kind of blackmail, I call the clutch."*

Virginia Satir (1972) - Peoplemaking.



Virginia Satir, Ph.D.

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We don't have relationships - we take hostages.

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*"There's no mistake about the person you're with; he or she is the perfect teacher for you, whether or not the relationship works out, and nonce you enter inquiry, you come to see that clearly. (p.90)."*

Byron Katie (2005). I Need Your Love - Is That True. Three River Press: NY.

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*"Once we begin to question our thoughts, our partners alive, dead or divorced, are always our greatest teachers. (p.90)."*

Byron Katie (2005). I Need Your Love - Is That True. Three River Press: NY.

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*"We use our beauty, our cleverness, our charm to capture someone for a partnership, as if he were an animal. And then when he wants to get out of the cage, we're furious. That doesn't sound very caring to me. It's not self love. I want my husband to want what he wants. And I also notice that I don't have a choice. That's self love. He does what he does and I love that. That's what I want because when I'm at war with reality, it hurts (p.73)."*



Byron Katie (2005). I Need Your Love - Is That True. Three River Press: NY.

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"We are always trying to get out of our emotional jail.... Mostly we try by begging, threatening, or pleasing other people, trying to get them to do it for us."



Virginia Satir, Ph.D.

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Dr. Jerry Greenwald (1975). Creative Intimacy: How to break the patterns that poison your relationships. Simon & Shuster: NY.

*"It is **not possible** for me to relate to others intimately and allow (and enjoy) their full expression of themselves if I **have not discovered how to do this for myself.**"*

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## Four Principles that Operate in Our Relationships

James Hollis (1998). The Eden Project: In Search of the Magical Other - A Jungian Perspective on Relationships.

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James Hollis, Ph.D.

***What we do not know about ourselves and what we cannot do for ourselves will be projected onto our partner.***

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James Hollis, Ph.D.

***We project our childhood wounds, our infantile longings, and our individuation imperative onto our partner.***

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**We project onto our partner the responsibility to do for us what we aren't able to do for ourselves.**

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James Hollis, Ph.D.

***Since our partner cannot, nor should not, bear responsibility for our wounds, our narcissism or our individuation, our projections (demands) give way to resentment which results in the problem of power (manipulation).***

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James Hollis, Ph.D.

***The only way to heal a faltering relationship is to take responsibility for our individuation (raise our level of differentiation).***

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*"It's not your job to understand me, it's mine. (p.160)."*

Byron Katie (2005). *I Need Your Love - Is That True*. Three River Press: NY.

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## Effects of Low Differentiation

- Creates Emotional Fusion that causes:
  - Dysregulation.
  - Taking things personally.
  - Other validated self-esteem.
  - A reflected sense of self (Schnarch, 1999).
  - Poor psychological boundaries.
    - Taking responsibility for things you are not responsible for like your partner's feelings.
    - Experiencing your partner's emotional reaction as your own feelings.
  - Emotional Reactivity - Anger, Depression and Anxiety

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*"It only takes one clear person to have a good relationship. (p. 104)."*

Byron Katie (2005). *I Need Your Love - Is That True*. Three River Press: NY.

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"So if your partner is angry, good. If there are things about him that you consider flaws, good, because **these flaws are your own, you're projecting them**, and you can write them down, inquire, and set yourself free. People go to India to find a guru, but you don't have to: You're living with one. Your partner will give you everything you need for your own freedom. (p.90)."



Byron Katie (2005). *I Need Your Love - Is That True*. Three River Press, NY.

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## Allen's Experience

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"...sobriety is only the bare beginning. It is only the first gift of the first awakening. If more gifts are to be received, our awakening has to go on. And if it does go on, we find that bit by bit by bit we can discard the old life – the one that didn't work – for a new life that can and does work under any conditions whatever. Regardless of worldly success or failure, regardless of pain or joy, regardless of sickness or health or even of death itself, a new life of endless possibilities can be lived if we are willing to continue our awakening."

Bill Wilson (1957).

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