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Author and Clinical Psychologist

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## **RECOVERY, RELATIONSHIPS, AND EMOTIONAL SOBRIETY**

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# **REFLECTIONS ON RECOVERY**

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**SHIFT IN PERSPECTIVE**

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**RECOVERY INVOLVES  
DEVELOPING A NEW ATTITUDE  
TOWARDS OUR PROBLEM, A  
NEW VIEW OF OUR SELF,  
OTHERS, AND LIFE ITSELF.**

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**THE CONSCIOUSNESS THAT  
CREATES A PROBLEM CANNOT  
SOLVE IT.**

**ALBERT EINSTEIN**

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**WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE IF WE ARE GOING TO RECOVERY?**

Jung is reported to have told his patient Rowland Hazard the following:



*"Here and there, once in a while, alcoholics have had what are called **vital spiritual experience**..... They appear to be in the nature of **huge emotional displacements and rearrangements**. Ideas, emotions and attitudes which were once the guiding forces for the lives of these men are suddenly **cast to one side**, and a completely **new set of conceptions and motives begin to dominate them**.*



Pg. 22. *Alcoholics Anonymous*"

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**ADMISSION & ACCEPTANCE**

*"...little good can come to any alcoholic who joins A.A. unless he has first **accepted his devastating weakness and all its consequences.**"*



(Twelve and Twelve, 1952, p.21)

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## STEP ONE

- Change begins with admission and awareness.

*"...few people will sincerely try to practice the AA program unless they have hit bottom."* (Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, Alcoholics Anonymous, 1952)

- Total surrender creates an existential crisis.

In this Step we are reduced to a state of "**absolute helplessness**."

In working this step we discover the **fatal nature of our situation** and yet we do not know what to do about it, we have no viable alternative.



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## SELF-HONESTY

*"So long as an individual cannot accept the fact of what he is, cannot permit himself to be fully aware of it, cannot fully admit the truth into his consciousness, he cannot move beyond that point: if he denies the reality of his condition, he cannot proceed to alter it, cannot achieve healthy changes ... (p. 110 - The Disowned Self)."*



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## THE PROCESS OF CHANGE

*"As long as you fight a symptom, it will become worse. If you take responsibility for what you are doing to yourself, how you produce your symptoms, how you produce your illness, how you produce your existence, you get in touch with yourself - growth begins, integration begins (p. 178)."*

Fritz Perls (1969). Gestalt Therapy Verbatim.



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# REFLECTIONS ON RELATIONSHIPS

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## STEP 8 - UNDERSTANDING OUR PATTERNS

"... it is equally necessary that we extricate from an examination of our personal relations every bit of information about ourselves and our fundamental difficulties. Since defective relations with human beings have nearly always been the immediate causes of our woes, including our alcoholism, no field of investigation could yield more satisfying and valuable rewards than this one. Calm, thoughtful reflection on personal relations can deepen our insight."



Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, Alcoholics Anonymous, 1952

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## EXPECTATIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS

"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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## EMOTIONAL DEPENDENCY

*“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**.”*



Fritz Perls, M.D.

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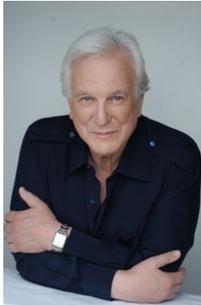
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## EMOTIONAL DEPENDENCY

*“Low self-esteem causes an “...excessive preoccupation with gaining the approval and avoiding the disapproval of others, hungering for validation and support at every turn of our existence.”*



Nathaniel Branden (1981)

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## EMOTIONAL DEPENDENCY

*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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# REFLECTIONS ON EMOTIONAL SOBRIETY

## TOWARDS A 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. - 2018*

## EMOTIONAL SOBRIETY = GROWING UP

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

Fritz Perls (1969). Gestalt Therapy Verbatim.



Fritz Perls, M.D.

## EMOTIONAL SOBRIETY = TAKING CARE OF OURSELVES

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



Drs. Miriam and Erving Polster

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

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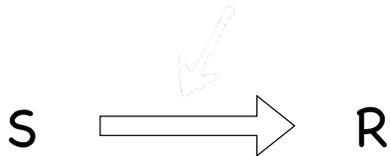
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## EMOTIONAL SOBRIETY IS PAUSING BEFORE REACTING



Viktor Frankl, M.D.

*"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."*



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## 12 Hidden Rewards of Making Amends



Finding Forgiveness and Self-Respect  
by Working Steps 8-10

Allen Berger, Ph.D.

## 12 *More* Stupid Things That Mess Up Recovery



Navigating Common Pitfalls  
on your Sobriety Journey

Allen Berger, Ph.D.

Author of 12 Stupid Things That Mess Up Recovery

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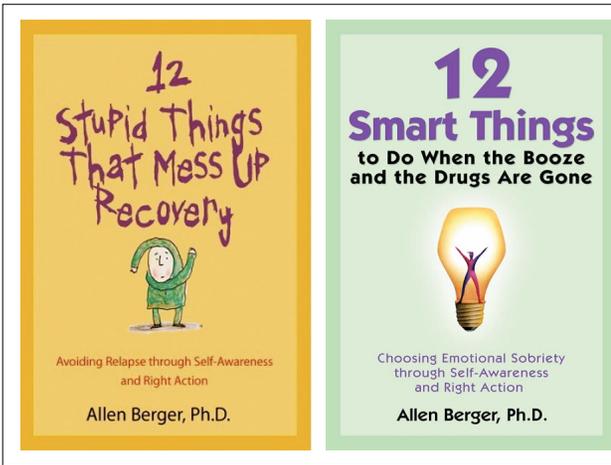
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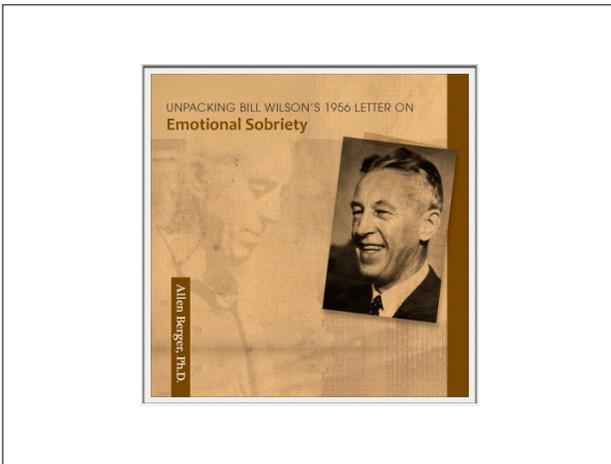
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