

STRAIGHT FROM THE HORSES MOUTH

OUR CODE

NICO T.

Love is a word frequently spoken about, but perhaps a word that is not exactly easy to define or understand. Love, it seems, “has little to do with pure reason (54:2).” Perhaps that is why love has so many false meanings. Perhaps that is why Bill W. never included a definition of love in our literature, but instead made it code to live by.

A clear distinction between *the real heroin addict* and just a *hard user*, is distinguished between a person who can stop on the basis of a sufficiently strong reason, such as “falling in love (21:1),” while the *real heroin addict* could not stop from such a reason. Yet, our prayer is that you may “learn the full meaning of love (153:1),” and that you act as a demonstration of “Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy Way of Life (63:2).”

So, what is the difference between these loves?

During a group counseling session at one of my many stints of rehab, the counselor brought in a mirror, and asked, “what do we see when we stand in front of it?” The exercise was of self-esteem building, but the idea of a mirror never left me. As I grew in understanding of spirituality, *the mirror*, took



Illustration by J.J. Grandville, 1888 in *The Mirror of Truth*, by Jean Peirre Claris de Florian, 1792

on a different meaning. The mirror, is without ego and without mind. If a little boy comes in front of it, it reflects a little boy. If a crooked object comes in front of it, it reflects it crooked, a straight object straight, a broken object broken. Everything is revealed as it really is. There is no discriminating mind or self-consciousness in the mirror. If something comes, the mirror reflects it; if something moves on, the mirror lets it move on.

The mirror is always empty of itself and therefore able to receive the other. The mirror has no conditions for acceptance. It receives and reflects back what is there, nothing more and nothing less. The mirror is the perfect lover. It does not evaluate or judge.

If I’m to grow in understanding of God’s Will, God’s Way of Seeing, and God’s Love, I must be a mirror. I must be no-thing so that I can receive some-thing. I must be liberated from my-*self*. I’m “undisciplined,” in my emotions, and need to “let God discipline me (88:2),” the tyranny of my own judgments, opinions, and feelings about everything.

[CONTINUED ON PG.2]

In God, my-*self* is no longer its own center. There is a death of the self-centered and self-sufficient ego. In its place is awakened a new and liberated self which loves and acts in the Spirit. “The fundamental idea of God is within us all (55:2)” and we are all “children of God (62:3).” When I stand in front of a mirror, I only see the fundamental idea, the image of God, and realize, Who I Am. I am created by my “Creator (25:2),” and my personhood is therefore in a direct relationship with the Divine Personhood. For me, all Love is living out of the realization, that *being*, and that *being* is Love- *I am Love*-before I do anything right or wrong, nice or nasty, worthy or unworthy. Love is my objective identity. Love is simply, Who-I am-In-The-Spirit.

From this true identity, Love can happen. Whatever I do, in recovery, service or in fellowship, will only bear fruit if I live and act by this identity, this truth, our code. Conscious contact with God is then experienced at a meaningful and deep level, when it’s driven by this truth, in my involvement with people, events, occupations, and members of our fellowship.

I must remember that this is a code to live by, but by no means *the standard* (at least not for me). “I’m completely willing to live along this spiritual line (60:1),” but most humbly, I fall short of this truth more than I live by it. I *do* want to Love others out of my objective identity, and I *do* want to Love God for bringing me this far, but I also want to be loved for *who I am (or who I think I am) apart from God, the autonomous and self-sufficient Nico*. This is the source of my never-ending pride, and it never works. I can easily justify that I’m a good-guy, that I’m lovable because of my own goodness independent from God. Out of this alloy of self-gratification, and need for validation from others, I commence to forge a weapon that will one day turn its flight on me and all but cut me to ribbons. I often

gather evidence to the contrary, of why I’m not good enough and unworthy. The same self-validating thoughts of why I’m good enough, boomerangs into why I’m not. This is because they are both coming from the same place, an unreliable place to say the least, but most of all, a place that is rooted in *self*. When rooted in my objective truth and identity, there is nothing to validate, it just “is what it is” and “I am, Who I am,” which is Love.

I need to appreciate this person- that I’m one who has been blessed, but also one who is broken. Appreciation of both sides is the real gift. I need to realize that I’m broken because my mind readily accepts the fables it is fed, and I’m blessed because that truth, a truth that is hidden, has been revealed to me¹. I have done nothing to earn this way of seeing, it is completely undeserved, and that I don’t need to perform spiritual gymnastics to earn more than I already have (I already have it). I must awaken to what is already there. Our 11th step teaches me how to do this: to not take credit, to self-sacrifice for others, to deflate the ego, which starves the *self*, so I can receive Love and reflect it back to others, just like a mirror. By starving my-*self*, my judgements and ideas, I can see the fundamental idea from anyone who walks in front of my mirror, and reflect it back, without it being tarnished from my own judgement. This is how I awaken to “the inner resource (570:1),” that has been with me all along. I must realize that I’m both nothing, *the mirror*, and everything, *Love*.

In this volume you will read about men and women who have described their personal adventures and experiences with Love. We say “Love knows no bounds,” this issue is dedicated to our members in Riverhead, that carry our message despite the barrier of distance

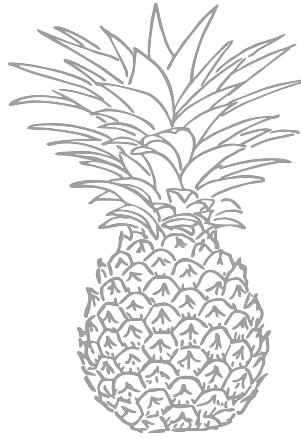
1. Pierre Claris de Florian, Jean. *The Fables of Florian*. Madrid, Florence. 1792.
[https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Fables_of_Florian_\(tr._Phelps\)/The_Mirror_of_Truth](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Fables_of_Florian_(tr._Phelps)/The_Mirror_of_Truth)

PINEAPPLES

JAY F.

I work at a popular brunch restaurant, and every few weeks we get a various assortment of new mugs. One Friday morning I was looking at a new one we got when I noticed that it had pineapples on it. I picked it up and shared with everyone how excited I was about my find. My best friend's wife, Rachel, who happened to be covering a shift that day, then yelled to me from across the restaurant to tell me how much she loved pineapples on things; shirts, backpacks, lamps, pillows, you get the idea.

Two days later I was back to work and Rachel was serving at her usual location about a half hour away. Brunch on a Sunday is always busy, and that day was no exception, but I couldn't help but notice one young man in particular donning a blaringly loud Hawaiian shirt with pineapples all over it. Thrilled, my mind went to Rachel and her pineapple infatuation, and thought I should take a picture of the shirt to send to her. Fear washed over me, and my ego said, "that's stupid. This kid will think you're weird." Very much aware of this fear, and despite it, I answered my ego



“ITS LESS ABOUT THE FRUIT AND MORE ABOUT THE RIPPLE EFFECT.”

with, “Jason, just ask the kid to take a picture of his shirt and stop letting fear control your actions.” Very much aware of this fear, and despite it, I answered my ego with, “Jason, just ask the kid to take a picture of his shirt and stop letting fear control your actions.” Or, in this case, like many others, my inactions. Stopping what I was doing, I asked the stranger if I could take a picture of his shirt and as it would turn out, he was more than happy to oblige. I took the photo, sent it to Rachel, who responded back with, “who is that.” “Some random guy,” I said honestly,

to which she replied, “amazing.”

Later that evening I was at my home group, when I felt my phone vibrate. It was Rachel; “Look what line I ended up on at the grocery store,” she said, with a picture of the same guy wearing the pineapple shirt. She confirmed it by asking him if he was at my restaurant earlier, and if a server had asked to take his picture. He said yes, telling him that she was on the receiving end of that original text. It was the same kid, eight hours later, in a different town, and yet here we all are, connected by pineapples, of all things.

It might seem confusing to see how pineapples can be applied to sobriety and the 12-steps, but it's less about the fruit and more about the ripple effect set in motion due to such a silly thing. A mug with pineapples - something so small that made someone I love so whimsically happy - that lead me to sacrificing a small, anxious and fearful part of my ego in an act of altruistic love, which then came around full circle.

‘Do small things with great love,’ even if it's just passing down the notion of pineapples.

NOTES FROM AREA

At our most recent area meeting, in December, a motion to unite New York State as one area was brought to the table. Currently, New York is divided into districts, such as the Capital District (Albany), the Long Island District (which we call Long Island Area), amongst Western District (Rochester), and Utica District (Utica).

Service Representatives took the motion to their respective group to vote on the motion. A few pros and cons should be clearly defined before voting on the motion. Cons first; If we are to unite as one area, an already selected world service delegate would have to resign their position, leaving New York, one less vote at the world service conference, and

the investment that delegate has already made, would have to be let go. Having one less vote at the conference, is not enough to swing a particular vote.

One of the pros to unite would allow New York State to open a non-for-profit bank account, as an entire area. This would allow individual districts, such as Long Island, and Capital to subsequently have their own non-for-profit bank accounts. The biggest benefit to having a non-for-profit bank account is it will enable us to deposit large sums of money (over \$10,000) without it being taxed. If New York ever held a large convention, or a world service conference, deposits of this amount could be a possibility. With a statewide bank account, New

York could also hold statewide conventions and conferences. The second biggest pro of uniting, is that we could provide resources to districts that are just starting, isolated, or in need. Think of our five boroughs and places as far as Plattsburg! Resources could include meeting starter kits, H&I resources, and a unified by-law packet, that could foster continuity amongst our fellowship. Keep in mind that tradition allows our district to run autonomously, and our financial contribution to a larger New York State area would be voted by our members.

Furthermore, we'd be following the suggested service structure of meeting-district-area-world.

CONNECT WITH AREA

- Visit us online at halongisland.org to learn more about HA Long Island, and resources.
- Sign up to receive the Horse's Mouth quarterly publication at halongisland.org/newsletter
- Stop by our area meetings every 3rd Thursday at: The Blue Point Bible Church
5 Maple St. Blue Point



ALL YOU NEED IS LOVE

AREILE K.

When I first got sober, I was holding onto the Beatles quote "All you need is love." In my first month of sobriety someone shared that God was love and I thought it sounded cool, I had no idea how much that concept would manifest and grow to mean for me.

All I knew was I was broken, full of shame and too embarrassed to say my own name. Someone I barely knew started introducing me to people because I was unable to say hi to anyone by myself. Then, I was introduced to

AT OUR CORE, WHEN WE LET GO OF ALL THE HUMANLY THINGS THAT MAKE UP OUR EGO, OUR SPIRITS ARE MADE OF LOVE.

someone who could sponsor me, and this sponsor used her free time to meet with me. These people were doing these things for me out of love. Selfless love. I stayed around and the people in the rooms kept showing me love-they still do. This love healed me to the point of being able to love myself enough to participate in the healing process too.

Love is also what made me hit the desperation needed to get here. My sober date is the day before my son was born. When I first laid eyes on him, I experienced an overwhelming feeling of love that gave me the moment of clarity I needed to even walk into an HA room. Love has continued to carry me throughout this process; whatever life throws my way.

I got sober Riverhead. I'm from all the way upstate, Rochester NY. I didn't know a single person when I came to Long Island. Now, my support network stretches from Riverhead to Nassau County. I have found genuine love and friendships in people in every single town. Regardless of distance- people show up for me, and I show up for them. When my best friend died, when I celebrated my anniversary, the good and bad days in between, distance

never prevents people from showing up with love for me, or I for them.

That's because at our core, when we let go of all the humanly things that make up our ego, our spirits are made of love. We just have to peel the layers away to get back to our soul, and we have to do that every day: but every single one of us is capable of being and acting, showing and creating love, and that's what this



program teaches and allows us to do.

A friend invited me to a young people's convention in Baltimore, where I ran into a man who had tears in his eyes. He recognized me as the homeless girl he used to see begging for change on the streets of Rochester a year prior. Mind you, I had traveled all the way to Maryland from Long Island, yet he knew me from Rochester. He told me how he had asked the members of his home group what they could do to help me, and together they all prayed for me. Now he runs into me-sober-at a convention-hundreds of miles away from our homes. He thanked me for restoring his faith in the power of prayer.

This powerful experience clearly shows me the power of love. God's love, compassionate and caring people's love. It proved that love creates miracles. It also showed me that love travels through time and space- no distance or time or borders, can stop love. Nothing can. Love is boundless- and God really is love. And since God is everything, and God is everywhere- love is, too.

EAST END LOVE

ADAM F.

So what would you do if you found out you were being placed, against your will, far away, in a town known for a jail and shopping outlets? If this was to be your home and your chance to recover? If you're an addict like me, who thrives on the familiar, then it sounds like a nightmare. It may sound strange coming from someone who was being released from jail, but even after a few months, jail becomes comfortable in a sense. Go figure. What I didn't realize, was that I was going to be thrust into a tiny microcosm, or what we like to call "the Riverhead bubble." But Riverhead wasn't different from anywhere else; you can find whatever you're looking for: The Good or The Bad. Naturally, The Bad would be the more attractive option for the newly sober addict. This could take the form of money-seeking, attention from the opposite sex, drama, gossip, the local gym, and a number of other distractions. Anything that can feed the ego. The plus side (or negative depending how you look at it) is that the area is notorious for an abundance of sober houses in proximity to one another, so the distractions were not in short supply. Now for the positive; (and this is where the love lives). There are also a ton of HA meetings in a small town with parks and restaurants,

and a few outpatients all within walking distance to one another. This makes for some really amazing opportunities to seek and build a strong fellowship.

At first I built a fellowship, but it resembled the same variety I craved in the past. It lacked true substance and had more to do with looking "good" and feeling "good", which ironically left me feeling "bad" in the long run. Ignorance and



temptation had gotten the best of me, and I dove into the distractions without hesitation. Nothing had changed. My friends, my behavior, my actions, my priorities. They all mirrored what was most familiar to me. Then it happened. The voice in my head started talking to me. The obsession kicked in, and before I knew it, I abandoned my half-assed quest towards sobriety, and me and my new "friends" were holding grams of beige powder. I was crushed. Little did I know this would change my life. What appeared to be my greatest defeat ended up being the most grace-filled event of my life. It led to a complete

reconstruction of mind and spirit. I had been at a juncture, and when I chose which path I would follow, I began my journey through the 12-steps. An amazing thing happened. I looked around and rather than disparity, I saw the potential of my surroundings. There was tons of support and love everywhere. I saw support in the outpatient counselors. I saw hope in the 12-step meetings. I saw love in the people who helped one another get and stay sober. I linked up with others who were moving in the same direction that I was, and we trudged forward hand in hand. It was only when I opened my eyes that I saw the hand of God, as well as the hands of his messengers on Earth, outstretched in my direction. I have followed in their footsteps, and in return I remain here to outstretch my hand to others in need. That's how it worked for me, and I hope that's how it will work for them.

"As is your sort of mind, so is your sort of search: You will find what you desire."

My point is, that there was nothing wrong with my circumstances, my environment, or my location. The only thing wrong was my ability to be honest, open-minded and willing. It turned out that everything that I needed was neatly tucked into a small town in Eastern Long Island.

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“WE ARE NOT SAINTS” GROUP OF ISLIP

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