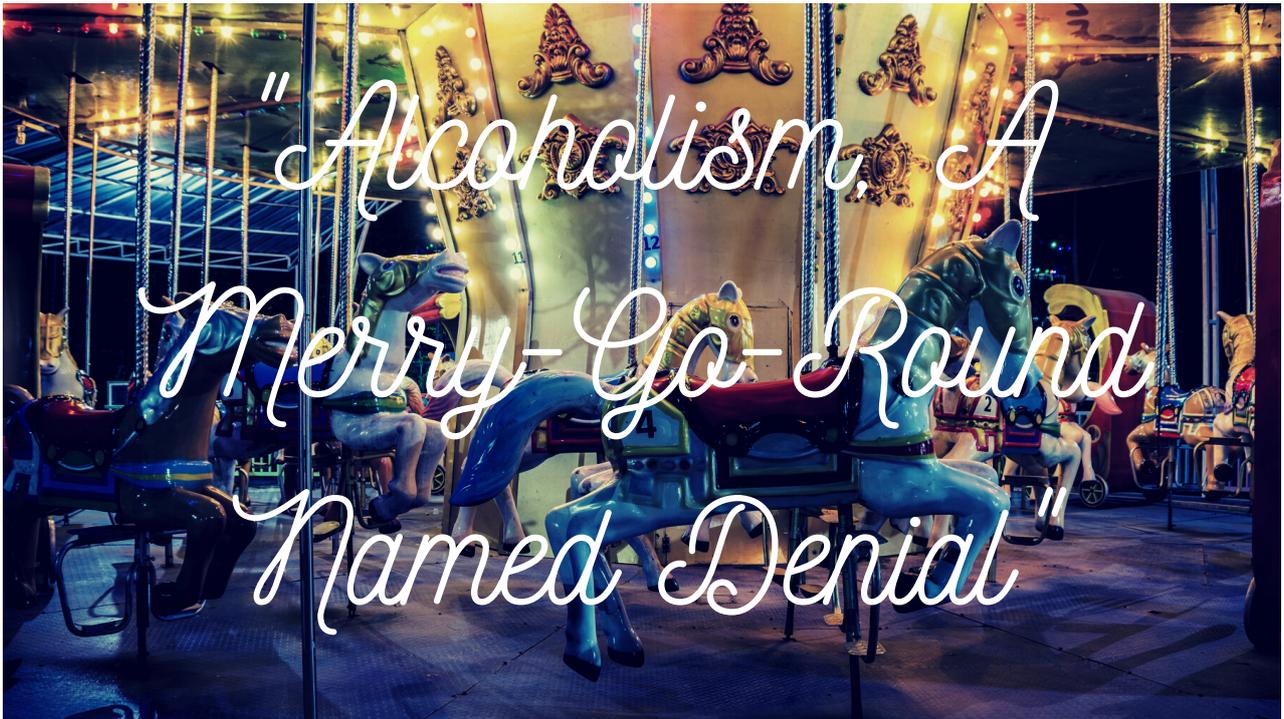


Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path. ~ A.A. Big Book, p.58



EXTRA! EXTRA! READ ALL ABOUT IT!



From your Intergroup

If you would like to contribute an article, or have any questions, please email us at aoio@aoio.org.

We are now located inside the Lighthouse. Here you will find AA literature - Big Books, 12 and 12, meditation books, coins and more. Please come visit us in beautiful downtown Chillicothe or check us out on our website at www.aoio.org.

740.774.2646

Office Hours

Check the aoio.org website for current hours.

★ **Volunteers Needed** ★

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2020 Quarter 4 AOIO Group Contributions

October

November

Chillicothe Weekday Noon
Chillicothe Big Book Study
McArthur A.A.

September

Portsmouth Alcoholic of Sorts
Minford Hope Group

AOIO sincerely appreciates all the donations that individuals and groups have made during these difficult times. It continuously amazes us how strong and resilient our fellowship is. Your donations have and will help us to continue to carry the message, provide A.A. resources and literature, etc. to those still suffering.

~ AOIO Board

Thank You

AOIO follows the Seventh Tradition and is supported by contributions by A.A. groups and A.A. members.

Please include your group name when sending in group contributions. Individual and group contributions can be made online at <https://www.aoio.org/contribute.html> or sent to:

AOIO, PO Box 772, Chillicothe, OH 45601

It is suggested by the General Service Conference that "individual groups, through an informed group conscience, adopt a specific contribution plan tailored to the group's financial situation." After the group expenses are paid (rent, coffee, literature, etc.) and prudent reserve is established, the group may decide to contribute to the following entities: Local District, Area Committee, Local Intergroup or Central Office, General Service Office.

If you are interested in more information on contributions and how A.A. is self-supporting per Tradition 7, the pamphlet - "Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix" by the General Service Conference is available at the AOIO office.

Inside Step One

Admit the Problem

By: Jeff Jay

Article taken in its entirety from:
<https://www.hazeldenbettyford.org/articles/jay/inside-step-one>

Almost everyone has a problem with the word "powerless." It drives people nuts, and for good reason. No one likes to think of themselves as powerless or vulnerable. Some people actually take offense to the word, saying it's demeaning and oppressive. They even use the word "powerless" as an excuse for not trying to work the Steps at all.

But Step One doesn't say people are powerless. It doesn't say they can't take charge of their lives, or they don't have the ability to change; quite the opposite. What Step One does do is unlock a great paradox. The first Step, in its puzzling but simple language, introduces us to a source of power we didn't know we could find.

If you or someone you know is struggling with addiction or a related issue like trauma, codependency, gambling, or compulsive behaviors, Step One is the key that unlocks the jail cell. It's not what we expect when we first encounter Twelve Step programs. In fact, for most of us it was maddening.

"I thought you were going to tell me how to stop using drugs? How does being powerless help me do anything? This is stupid."

I wish I had a dollar for every time I've heard that one. Working as an addiction counselor for many years, I've heard every form of resistance you can imagine, and then some. But as simple as the language of the Step might seem, it calls for a closer examination.

In AA and Al-Anon, the first half of the Step says: "We admitted we were powerless over alcohol." It does not say we were powerless over our choices, over our life, or over our relationships with other people. It says we were powerless over alcohol, and that limiting phrase, that tight focus on the drug, is critical.

Here's the great paradox. In order to gain power over our addiction, we have to admit our powerlessness over the drug. Sounds weird, doesn't it? Sounds like we're giving up and falling into a bottomless pit. But that's not the case.

We have to change our focus. We can't fight the addiction head on, if for no other reason than we've been doing that repeatedly without success. In order to break our addiction,

we have to admit that we can't change what it does to us. It affects our brain, our body, and our spirit; and there's no sense in denying it. We're powerless over the effect the chemical or behavior has on us. We're not going to get good at drinking or drugging, we're not going to get more rational about it. We're not going to get better at controlling. We've tried it a hundred times already.

If we want to get a grip on our problem, we have to admit we're powerless over the drug, that we have a medical condition called addiction, and get to work on remission. It's like admitting that we have tooth decay, and we need to go to the dentist. It's just a fact, we're powerless over that fact, and now we need to take action.

Consider the star athlete who's just lost a big game. She's crushed, overwhelmed, dejected. But there's another big game next week. How can she get over the loss?

Welcome to Step One. She has to put the loss behind her. The loss happened, and she has to admit she's powerless to change that fact. Whatever she does, she can't afford to bring that fact into her future. By admitting she's powerless to change that loss, she releases herself from its shackles and walks freely into her future, fully empowered to do things differently, and not repeat the same mistakes.

As long as we try to control an issue, whether it's addiction, codependency, or a tough loss on the soccer field, we're bound to keep losing. Step One puts it succinctly: "We admitted we were powerless over alcohol, that our lives had become unmanageable." The second phrase is important: "our lives had become unmanageable."

Unmanageability is one of the ways we learn we have a problem. There are consequences to our addiction that are driving us crazy (not to mention other people). A businessman alcoholic may say, "I don't have a problem! I manage 250 people and make a huge salary." But his wife is ready to divorce him, his kids don't respect him, and he's just been arrested for a second drunk-driving charge. The confusion arises from the fact that everything isn't unmanageable. He may be holding on to his job, but if he's honest with himself (which he won't be, at first), he'll see that his addiction is making significant parts of his life unmanageable.

The great paradox tells us that we don't need to wrestle with those facts. We don't have to struggle with the drugs and we don't have to try to change the consequences. The first thing we have to do if we want to get better is simply admit we have a problem. We have to accept the fact that the substance has whipped us, and that there are real consequences which prove it's going to continue beating us—if we don't change.

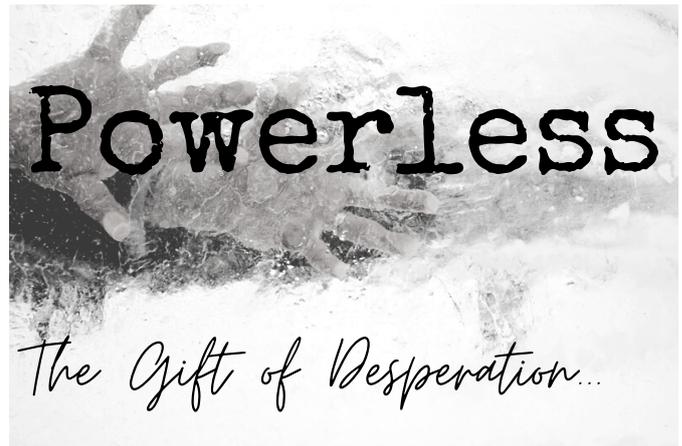
Inside Step One continued...

We can't afford to play the blame game and we can't afford to make excuses. If we want to get better, we have to get honest. It's not my parents' fault, it's not my spouse's fault, it's not my boss's fault; in fact, it's nobody's fault. I've got a medical problem called addiction, a potentially fatal disease. But at the same time, I'm lucky, because this particular condition can be put in remission. It can't be cured, but it can be put in remission.

Nothing can be done about my problem until I admit I've got a problem. Change doesn't begin until I accept the fact that I can't control it, and that it's costing me dearly. The other eleven steps will show me the way out of this mess, but none of them are meaningful until I internalize Step One. The flip side of the coin we call acceptance is something called surrender. We have to stop fighting the battle. There is a way to beat this thing, but, paradoxically, it's not by fighting it head on.

As stated in the book, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*: "Step One showed us an amazing paradox: We found that we were totally unable to be rid of the alcohol obsession until we first admitted that we were powerless over it." When we turn away from the problem and embrace the solution, we've taken our first step into a new world.

Of course, really accepting Step One will make you crazy. But help is on the way. Step Two will help restore us to sanity in a most unusual way. More on that next time.



According to the first step of Alcoholics Anonymous, we need to "Admit that we were powerless over alcohol - that our lives had become unmanageable." They say that this is the one step that we must do perfectly.

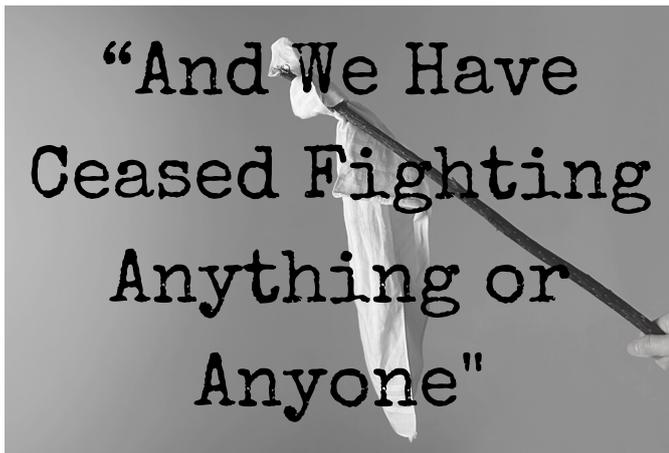
I knew I was an alcoholic from the time I was a teenager. The first time I drank, my friends said they had to pry the bottle out of my hands. I woke up the next morning feeling full of shame, hung-over and wondering what happened the night before. My first drinking session led to a black out. I knew this was not normal. This unfortunately would be the norm for the next 26 years.

I knew my life was unmanageable. I was drinking to self-medicate - to fix the chaos in my mind. It was a vicious cycle. I would feel shame and dread after each drinking bout. The only thing I thought cured it was to drink more. I knew I needed to fix it. I needed to fix it before something really bad happened and everyone knew that I was an alcoholic. The more I tried to fix it the worse it got. The self-medicating even stopped working. Alcohol stopped numbing my mind.

I remember towards the end looking up and talking to someone I cared about that had passed. I told them they were raining terror down on me. I was not angry with them; I knew that something had to change. I knew something bad was going to have to happen for me to find peace. I chose to take a permanent solution to a temporary and very fixable problem. Fortunately, my higher power was watching over me that day and what I had planned did not bear fruition. Instead, my secret was out. I woke up and felt relieved and knew beyond a shadow of a doubt I wanted to live. I knew that I was willing to do anything. I knew I was powerless over alcohol and that I needed help.

I am grateful that sequence of events worked out as they did. I needed to hit my point of utter desperation. The gift of desperation.... is truly a gift.

Anonymous



Anyone who has been around the rooms of AA more than once is likely familiar with the 9th Step promises, as they are read at the beginning of most meetings along with our Preamble, How It Works, and the Traditions that bind us together. However, there are many more promises offered to the alcoholic who still suffers if he/she is able to muster enough honesty, open-mindedness, and willingness to take some suggestions and accept the spiritual way of life outlined in our 12 Steps (there are actually promises connected with each Step in the Big Book if you look hard enough). Of all the promises available to those who put the work in, my favorite, and perhaps the most relevant promise for the current state of affairs, can be found in chapter 6 of the Big Book (Into Action).

"And we have ceased fighting anything or anyone – even alcohol" (AA Big Book, p. 84). What a promise this is for an alcoholic whose whole life, both before and after the introduction of alcohol and other substances, could best be summed up with the word "fighting!" I witnessed the constant fighting of my parents as a child, I fought back against the childhood abuse I experienced when I got old enough to stand up for myself, I fought to be accepted by my peers, I fought those I ripped off to support my alcohol and drug use, I fought the law (and the law won, every single time), and I eventually, once reaching the jumping off point, fought alcoholism and drug addiction to no avail for many years. Fighting was a way of life.

When I first came to AA and heard that I had to "surrender to win," it scared me, so much so that I gave away 19 months of sobriety to try the old game again. But my way didn't work. I was finally beat into submission and became willing to go to any lengths to stay sober, even if that meant giving up the fight that I had become so familiar with. I began taking suggestions, I developed a working relationship with a God of my own understanding, and I learned the value of altruism and giving back, all through working the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous with a very patient sponsor. AA taught me to put the gloves down.

Then 2020 came; COVID-19, racial tensions, treacherous

political climate. An all-you-can-eat buffet of ammunition for a lifelong fighter! But AA has taught me that I can choose to keep my dipper in my own bucket. I don't have to convince you why my opinion on getting or not getting the COVID vaccine is the only right opinion on the matter, I don't have to get into debates about whether or not systemic racism exists, and I don't even have to blast my political views all over social media for the trolls to rip to shreds. Best of all, AA taught me that I don't have to hate you if your views differ from mine! The energy that I used to burn up fighting about things like these is being put to much better use today, thanks to AA and the promises that have materialized in my life from practicing the spiritual principles of the 12 Steps in all of my affairs.

Michael H.

"And we have ceased fighting anything or anyone – even alcohol. For by this time sanity will have returned. We will seldom be interested in liquor. If tempted, we recoil from it as from a hot flame. We react sanely and normally, and we will find that this has happened automatically. We will see that our new attitude toward liquor has been given us without any thought or effort on our part. It just comes! That is the miracle of it. We are not fighting it, neither are we avoiding temptation. We feel as though we had been placed in a position of neutrality – safe and protected. We have not even sworn off. Instead, the problem has been removed. It does not exist for us. We are neither cocky nor are we afraid. That is our experience. That is how we react so long as we keep in fit spiritual condition."

p. 84-85 Big Book



A few people told me when I came to A.A. to be sure I had a black dress. That seemed rather morbid and negative to me at the time.

I have attended a couple funerals since I came into the rooms of A.A. One of which was for someone that I was very close to. When I received the text that he was had died, I was sad and angry, but I was not completely surprised. Numerous thoughts immediately started going through my head. I should have followed my gut and went to find him. I should have reached out to him more. There were so many immediate thoughts about what I "should have" done...

Alcoholics Anonymous has taught me that I cannot fix another alcoholic. They have to be willing to ask for help. They too have to get to their point of desperation and willing to admit to themselves that they are powerless over alcohol and that their lives have become unmanageable. I cannot do that work for someone else. I can only share how I did it. This one though hit me hard - really hard.

I made a choice that day to evaluate my own program. What was working and what wasn't. I am still in the process of evaluating and making changes. I choose to take the lessons out of this tragedy rather than immersing myself in it. I think about him often. I hope that he is no longer battling his demons and is feeling happy, joyous and free up in heaven. I am grateful that in his tragedy lessons can be learned. I added two permanent reminders to myself out of this - a heart for "Love & Tolerance" and shamrock to remind me to "never give up the fight". I look at those reminders daily.

Anonymous

I have absolutely no pleasure in the stimulants in which I sometimes so madly indulge. It has not been in the pursuit of pleasure that I have periled life and reputation and reason. It has been the desperate attempt to escape from torturing memories, from a sense of insupportable loneliness and a dread of some strange impending doom.

EDGAR ALLAN POE

*Do not go gentle into
that good night*

By: Dylan Thomas

Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,
Because their words had forked no lightning they
Do not go gentle into that good night.

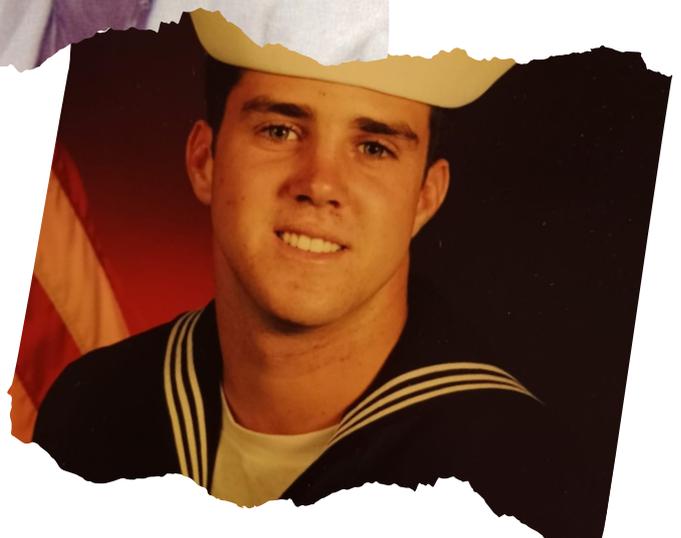
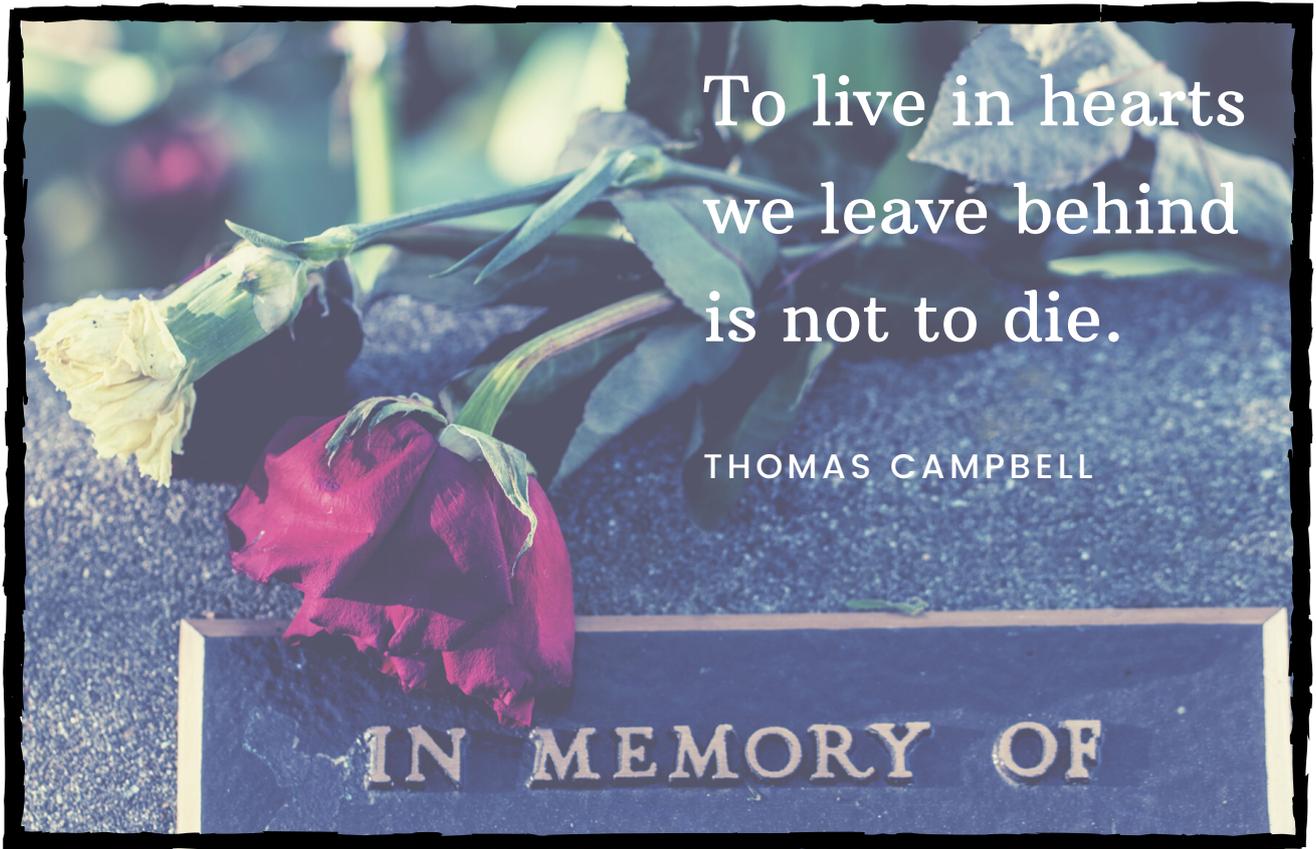
Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

And you, my father, there on that sad height,
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I
pray.

Do not go gentle into that good night.
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.





By: Melodie Beattie

SAY THANK YOU, UNTIL YOU MEAN IT.

THANK GOD, LIFE, AND THE UNIVERSE FOR EVERYONE AND EVERYTHING SENT YOUR WAY.

GRATITUDE UNLOCKS THE FULLNESS OF LIFE. IT TURNS WHAT WE HAVE INTO ENOUGH, AND MORE. IT TURNS DENIAL INTO ACCEPTANCE, CHAOS TO ORDER, CONFUSION TO CLARITY. IT CAN TURN A MEAL INTO A FEAST, A HOUSE INTO A HOME, A STRANGER INTO A FRIEND. IT TURNS PROBLEMS INTO GIFTS, FAILURES INTO SUCCESSES, THE UNEXPECTED INTO PERFECT TIMING, AND MISTAKES INTO IMPORTANT EVENTS. IT CAN TURN AN EXISTENCE INTO A REAL LIFE, AND DISCONNECTED SITUATIONS INTO IMPORTANT AND BENEFICIAL LESSONS. GRATITUDE MAKES SENSE OF OUR PAST, BRINGS PEACE FOR TODAY, AND CREATES A VISION FOR TOMORROW.

GRATITUDE MAKES THINGS RIGHT.

GRATITUDE TURNS NEGATIVE ENERGY INTO POSITIVE ENERGY. THERE IS NO SITUATION OR CIRCUMSTANCE SO SMALL OR LARGE THAT IT IS NOT SUSCEPTIBLE TO GRATITUDE'S POWER. WE CAN START WITH WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE HAVE TODAY, APPLY GRATITUDE, THEN LET IT WORK ITS MAGIC.

SAY THANK YOU, UNTIL YOU MEAN IT. IF YOU SAY IT LONG ENOUGH, YOU WILL BELIEVE IT.

TODAY, I WILL SHINE THE TRANSFORMING LIGHT OF GRATITUDE ON ALL THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF MY LIFE.