

The Golden Key

On coming home at night, Mr. A finds his neighbor Mr. B searching for something on the ground underneath the streetlight. Mr. A asks Mr. B what he is looking for and Mr. B tells him that he is looking for his lost key. So Mr. A proceeds to help him look for the key. When, after looking for some time, they are not able to locate the key, Mr. A finally asks: "Are you sure you lost your key right here, under this light?" Mr. B answers: "No, but it's too dark over there, where I lost it, to find anything." —Author Unknown

When you were seeking happiness, you looked for alcohol/drugs. When you needed love, you found "casual" sex. This caused unbearable suffering – your spirit became attached to things outside of yourself, where you have no power. You have been looking for happiness and love in the wrong places. No matter how long you look, you won't find it – because it is not there.

In early sobriety, you might be tempted to go back to the sources of quick oblivion to find relief from your feelings. That's what we do – when we feel lost, we fall back on our experiences and memories. However, just like Mr. B, you will not find your key where it isn't. If you haven't found it yet – don't give up. The golden key is where it has been all along. Even though it has been hidden underneath your fear and confusion, you can and will find it – if you keep looking in the right place: within yourself. Pull your spirit back from attachments outside of yourself. Your experience has taught you that you have been looking in the wrong place. Make it through the day sober, one day at a time, and the dark gray fog of doom and gloom will dissipate – and you will find your golden key.

In recovery we are meant to learn endurance; we must sustain our newly found hope, and make our sobriety our number one priority – even though it requires sitting with our feelings without acting out. Focus on your breath, notice exactly where these feelings are located in your body, and allow them to be what they are. Although you may feel uncomfortable, you will notice that the feelings are not unbearable. You have been living with them for so long; it will not get any worse than what you already know. I admit that early sobriety can be difficult at times, just as with any recovery from a long and severe illness. Keep in mind that you are in the process of healing. You will get well, even without any effort. Recovery from addiction happens by itself – you WILL recover, as long as you give your body and mind a chance to heal.

Happiness is a by-product of living the right kind of a life, of doing the right thing. Do not search for happiness, search for right living and happiness will be your reward.
—Richmond Walker, Twenty-Four Hours a Day