

THE MAGIC CLUB

The Magic Club didn't look magical the first time I walked in. It looked like a room full of strangers I was sure were judging me. I didn't know yet that the magic had already started.

I had already quit drinking nine weeks before that meeting — not because I was enlightened or spiritually awakened or ready to turn my life around. No, I quit because a doctor called with my bloodwork results and told me I was moments away from cirrhosis of the liver. Moments. As in: *this is not a drill*. So I quit for 30 days like they suggested. I didn't pick up a drink. Not once. Not even when I was scared or angry or lonely. I even got the call that everything had cleared up after 30 days but I should still not drink. I had already taken a suggestion!!! I didn't know it then, but that was my higher power magically helping me before I knew He existed.

Walking into that first meeting on January 1st, 2023 felt like crashing a secret society. Everyone seemed to know where to sit, who to hug, what inside jokes to laugh at. I sat there sheepishly, clutching my gas station coffee like it was a security blanket, convinced everyone was whispering about me. Spoiler alert: they weren't. They were talking about themselves — something I would learn to believe later....much later.

I was angry. Defensive. Convinced everyone was against me. I didn't realize I was carrying years of pain, anger, and resentments. I thought AA was a magic club and the Steps were magic tricks: *I'm here. You can fix me now*.

But the magic was slow. Patient. Stubborn. The kind of magic that doesn't show up with fireworks — it shows up very quietly.

Three days in, I got a sponsor. I didn't know it then, but that was my first act of courage. She handed me the Steps — the spellbook of the Magic Club — and I charged forward like someone expecting a parade at the end of each one. I thought:

- If I finish Step One, I'll feel healed.
- If I finish Step Two, I'll feel peaceful.
- If I finish Step Three, I'll be transformed.
- Etc.

But the Steps don't change you when you finish them. They change you when you live them.

Meanwhile, I wasn't making real friends. I wasn't letting anyone in. I told anyone who would listen how rude people were in the program, how they talked behind my back, how they didn't like me. I was certain I was the center of their conversations — the star of their judgment.

Then someone said something that struck me: "People are probably talking about themselves. You're not the center of everyone's attention."

Another person added: “If you don’t connect with someone in the rooms they are not here to help you someone else needs them.”

Both landed like truth bombs I didn’t want but desperately needed.

Because when I was drinking, I *was* the center of attention — or at least I believed I was. Loud, funny, adored, the life of the party. Popularity felt like love. Being seen felt like being valued. Being surrounded by people felt like mattering.

Sobriety revealed the truth:

- Those people didn’t want anything to do with me once I stopped drinking.
- When they did talk to me, they gave me their drinking résumés — stories of how “fine” they were and how little they really drank
- They weren’t trying to connect. They were trying to feel better about themselves.

I was learning — painfully — that the Magic Club wasn’t about being the center of attention. It was about learning to be part of something bigger than myself.

And then came the first magic act.

It was month four, a Tuesday night meeting in Johns Island, South Carolina. I was waiting for my turn to speak, rehearsing every word in my head like I was auditioning for a Broadway show. My heart was pounding. My mind was rewriting, editing, doubting, panicking.

And then something happened.

Something soft. Something subtle. Something unmistakably spiritual.

I felt something come over me — not a rush, not a jolt, not a shock. A blanket. A soft, warm, gentle blanket that wrapped around my shoulders and settled. And then I heard it, not with my ears but with something deeper:

“You got this. Everything is going to be all right.”

It was my higher power. Whispering. Reassuring. Holding me.

That moment stayed with me. It still does. It will forever.

It was the night I realized the Magic Club wasn’t just a room full of people. It was a place where the spiritual world could reach me — gently, quietly, and exactly when I needed it.

After that, sobriety didn’t get easier — but I got more honest.

I cried a lot of tears. The kind that feel like grief for the life you thought you had and fear for the life you don't know how to build. I lived in the victim role for a long time. I couldn't understand why all these things were happening *to* me.

But then the magic formula revealed another truth:

- I played a part in all of this.
- Some of the chaos I was front and center for.
- Some of it was out of my control.
- Some of it was old wounds I never tended to.
- Some of it was the ripple effect of drinking, running, hiding, and hurting.

Realizing this didn't make anything easier. But it made everything clearer.

It was the hard magic — the kind that doesn't comfort you, the kind that confronts you. The kind that says: *You are not just the victim. You are also the author.*

As time progressed, I restarted the Steps over and over. Each time, I learned a little more. Each sponsor revealed a new angle, a new truth, a new piece of myself I hadn't seen before. It wasn't pretty. But it was magic — the kind that unfolds slowly.

And along the way, I met so many magical wizards.

They didn't float or glow. Their magic was subtle: a warm voice, a steady presence, a way of seeing me without flinching. They took me under Their wing little by little starting the day I joined the Magic Club.

These magicians already knew some magic tricks and they were willing to teach me when I was ready. Then the day finally came where I walked all the way into the Magic Club and sat all the way down in my magical seat and really started to believe. From that point on the magic tricks got better and even though I was still struggling I wasn't ready to go back out into the wild.

The Magic Club taught me things I didn't know I needed to learn:

- resentment is heavy
- grief is patient
- shame is sticky
- fear is loud
- old stories don't die until you stop telling them

And the magic is and will always be in the rooms of recovery but the biggest bag of tricks was in the 12 Steps.

The magic was in:

- showing up
- listening
- telling the truth
- letting people love me before I knew how to love myself

Now, almost 4 years later, I'm not "fixed." I'm transformed.

I've learned:

- anger was armor
- pain was unspoken history
- resentment was self-protection
- connection is medicine
- service is magic

I'm steady. I'm present. I'm turning my pain into purpose. I'm part of the Magic Club now, not a visitor.

The real magic was in me — the part that walked in angry, broken, and unwilling, but still walked in.

The way I viewed the Magic Club did change.

But I also did the work and magically changed myself.

And that's the kind of magic that lasts.