



Published by
Cleveland Central Committee of A.A.

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614 Superior Ave. N.W.
Cleveland, Ohio 44113

VOL. XLII-No. 4

THE WORD IS LAUGHTER...

Laughter is precious. It can rescue you from an embarrassing situation. It can give you a fresh approach to a problem. It can help you keep a sense of proportion. Laughter offers physical benefits, too. It makes you breathe deeper, exercises the diaphragm, and makes the wrinkles that are bound to appear in your face pleasant ones. Laughter even makes friends - laugh and the world laughs with you! As someone has said: "The most completely lost of all days is that on which one has not laughed."

AA THOUGHT FOR THE DAY...

If we're going to stay sober, we've got to learn to want something else more than we want to drink. When we first came into AA, we couldn't imagine wanting anything else so much or more than drinking. So we had to stop drinking on faith, on faith that some day we really would want something else more than drinking. But after we've been in AA for a while, we learn that a sober life can really be enjoyed. We learn how nice it is to get along well with our family at home, how nice it is to do our work well at the office, how nice it is to try to help others. Have I found that when I keep sober, everything goes well for me?

CRITICISM IS A DISEASE

Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship composed of imperfect people. None is without faults, but the amazing thing is that God has been able to work wonders through fellowship of the imperfect. In fact, He has never had a chance with any other kind.

If any AA member ever finds a perfect AA group. . . one in which there is no **fault**...he will come to the place where there is nothing for him or the membership to do. It is the imperfections of the membership and prospective members which constitute the task.

If any AA group ever **finds** the perfect leader, he will seem unreal, completely without understanding of the difficulties under which the members struggle.

It is the imperfect working together, wrestling with their weaknesses and forgiving one another's faults which makes the perfect group.

The AA member who has become infected with the contagion of criticism is one who has lost sight of the major cause. He has become ingrossed in details and missed the supreme design.. His eyes have wandered from the alcoholics who need help and **focussed** on the faults of those whom the program has helped. This inevitably has the effect of drying up the aspirations of his life and substituting animosities and jealousies.

There can be no serene sobriety, unity, strength, progress or fellowship in any **AA** group or individual AA member that is cursed with the contagion of criticism.

THINK BEFORE CRITICIZING.

By W.R.T., Huntington, W. Va.

HOME GROUP

I have seen something at my homegroup which upsets me. We, like other groups, have a roster which has been signed by quite a few people. We also have a rather large attendance every week. What distresses me is that of all the people that signed the roster we have only a handful that help with coffee, set up, ashtrays and cleanup.

When I came in A.A. I was told that signing a roster was a commitment to your home group. That meant to me that I am to help that group operate. Activity is a very important part of my sobriety. Besides you get **alot** of good fellowship coming early and help set up and leaving a little late after helping clean up.

At a recent meeting the lead devoted much time to discussing activity, home groups etc. Also most of the comments were geared toward the same. But to no avail the same people were there to clean up. I am aware that I can only change myself but you would think that if they were listening they would have heard!

Is a little extra time & work for the benefit of the meeting too much to ask for what we have received?

Holly P.
Bedford, Ohio

PREPARING BODY, MIND, AND **SPIRIT**

I'm one of those alcoholics that when you talk about the steps, all my mind wants to do is not listen. So each day I do a couple of things to help me with this problem. I get down on my knees and pray, read something positive (Big Book, **12 & 12**, etc.), clean-up and eat. Then when someone talks about the steps, my body, mind, and spirit are ready. Other things I do through out the day are look at the step that I am on, work with another person in our out of A.A., go to meetings, talk to my sponsor (If I can get a handle on him, lot of you all know what I mean). This is the only way I can begin to handle or face the question of the steps. One step at a time, do the leg work, and do whats in front of me. If I want to be happy, joyous, and free. Believe me I know I can be negative, most of the time I love being negative. When I do what the A.A. program and the fellowship tells me about the steps, I can turn negative into positive. So if your like me, **WORK THE STEPS..**

Bishop

A.A. HISTORY

Mitchell K. is trying to gather information about the beginning of AA. Please send this to.

#1 Blackstallion Court
Middletown, N.Y. 10940

CLARENCE S. is ill at home and would like to hear from his many friends. 142 Laketrippet Dr. S. Castleberry, FLA. 32707. Phone 1-305-834-6862.



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Harry D., Founder and Editor 1692.1966

VOL. 42 JANUARY 1984 NO. 4

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 1984-8:00 P.M.

OLD STONE CHURCH - PUBLIC SQUARE
CLEVELAND, OHIO

ALL GROUP REPRESENTATIVES WELCOME
BE INFORMED

THIRD LEGACY MEETING

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 1984-2:00 P.M.

ST. JOSEPH'S CHURCH
STATE RTE. 44 & PIONEER TRAIL
ONE MILE SOUTH OF 82
MANTUA, OHIO

20TH NATIONAL A.A. WOMEN'S CONFERENCE.

FEBRUARY 23 to 26, 1984
ATLANTA, GEORGIA
P.O. BOX 98409

INTERGROUP DINNER-DANCE MAY 5, 1984

SPEAKER: LIZ B. JAMAICA, N.Y.
\$13.00 PER PERSON

IN MEMORIAM

Our Condolences to the families of following members who have passed away recently.

LILLIAN WALTHER, member of Redwood Group and worker at our district office.

CHARLIE PACE, active member of The Chardon Group with 22 years of sobriety.

SHAKY GARVIN, active member of The Aurora Group had 37 years sobriety.

SAM GRADY, active 30 year member of The Aphthorp Group.

ED (SHANGHI) WISNIEWSKI, active member of Old Corlett Group.

GENE ROLLINS, cofounder of The Sobriety Group.

ED BARNES, old time member of The Akron Area. Wrote articles regular for Akron Intergroup News.

If you tell a person there are exactly 483 billion stars in the sky, he'll accept it as the truth. But tell an alcoholic that it's the first drink that gets you drunk, and he has to make a personal investigation of it.

NECESSITY FOR HONESTY

A short time ago, I was asked to speak on a panel where the topic for discussion was "Necessity For Honesty." It was a well chosen and opportune subject as anything dealing with honesty is vital for us alcoholics. We ignore honesty during our drinking days as it would interfere with our drinking life and therefore, we had no place for it during those daily struggles.

Due to our compulsive habit and our lack of control over it, we could not stomach an honest approach to life. Rather, we self imposed deceit and deception in its place, prone to lie, cheat and even steal, to further our habit and to cover up our wrongs and shortcomings. We lived in a pressure cooker from which we could not extricate ourselves, kidding ourselves and attempting to fool others. Our families, friends, neighbors, our bosses and all whom we came in contact with, easily saw through our mask of deceit.

Some of us even came to believe our lies during those years and we lost all sight of right or wrong. Right or wrong no longer seemed to bother what conscience we were able to retain.

But finally there came the day and whether we were forced, pushed, or entered A.A. of our own volition, which makes no difference now, what mattered is that we had arrived. Many of our readers have enjoyed a lengthy sobriety, some a very long sobriety and some have joined us just recently. None of us however, would be here today, had we not gotten honest with ourselves.

Honestly as we know it today, goes somewhat beyond eliminating the lies, cheating and stealing once practiced. It is now a vital pattern in our daily lives, in order to maintain a happy, contented sobriety. Our sobriety best never be accepted as something automatic, regardless of the days, months or years, just because we have stepped over the threshold and through the door into A.A. Being honest affords us more than just being sober. It avails us other benefits in daily living.

1. It has granted us the opportunity to get sober.
2. It is most essential and helpful in staying sober.
3. We are a better person because of it and we have learned to like ourselves.
4. Honesty has no bad side affects, all are positive.
5. It enables others to take our word at face value, we are trusted, proving we are once more respected.
6. Every morning, we can look the man in the glass right in the eye and need not turn our head aside.
7. We no longer have to remember what we said yesterday, the day before, last week or month, as was once the case.

Honesty is the backbone of our character, all good things start with it. There are no replacements or substitutions for it and such an attempt would prove to be foolish folly and could prove fatal to our sobriety.

Only a part of our day is spent in A.A. activity, at meetings, on committees, sponsoring and such, a greater part is spent on the outside. We must practice being honest at all times in order to make each day a disciplined and productive one, which will make each day a lesser task.

We are fully aware of what being honest has done for us. Compare it with the dismal life we once led and there can be no question what course we must continue to follow daily.

Anonymous

A DEFINITION OF MATURITY

Maturity is many things. First it is the ability to base a judgment on the Big Picture - the Long Haul. It means being able to pass up the fun-for-the-minute and select the course of action that will pay off later. One of the characteristics of infancy is the I-want-it-NOW approach. Grown-up people are able to wait.

Maturity is the ability to stick with a project or a situation until it is finished. The person who is constantly changing jobs, changing friends and changing mates is immature. Everything seems to turn sour after a while.

Maturity is the ability to face unpleasantness, frustration, discomfort and defeat without complaint or collapse. The mature person knows he can't have everything his own way. Nobody wins 'em all. He is able to defer to circumstances to other people - and to time.

Maturity means doing what is expected of you, and this means being dependable. It means keeping your word. Bound in with dependability is personal integrity. Do you mean what you say - and say what you mean?

The world is filled with people that can't be counted on. They are never around in a crisis. They break promises and substitute alibis for performance. They show up late - or not at all. They are confused and disorganized. Their lives are a maze of unfinished business. Such behavior suggests a lack of self-discipline-which is a large part of maturity.

Maturity is the ability to make a decision and stick with it, riding out the storms that may follow. This requires clear thinking. And the courage to stand by your position once you've made it.

Immature people spend a lifetime exploring possibilities and then doing nothing. Action requires courage. And courage means maturity.

Maturity is the ability to harness your abilities and your energies and do more than expected. The mature person refuses to settle for mediocrity. He would rather aim high and miss the mark than aim low - and make it.

Tri-County Newsletter

ANOTHER LOOK AT STEP 3

Turning my will and my life over to the care of God — God's will in our lives brings peace.

When we fill our minds with God's will for our lives to the extent that we can accept God's will for our lives, well, a well known writer said it best, "In his will is our peace." That is so true for a number of reasons:

1. It takes fear out of our lives.
2. It relieves us of burden.
3. It gives us a commitment that eliminates conflict.
4. There is peace in God's will because it brings us the approval of a good conscience.

We need not worry about what God's will for our lives is, for if we are doing the best we know how with our lives, God **will** lead us to better and richer lives.

It's important to show appreciation, to God for our blessings, to wife or husband and children for what they mean to us, to people at work for the support they give us. Never miss an opportunity to make an expression of appreciation for something.

What life is really all about is our relationship with others. People loving and helping each other. Be thankful then that we find it easier to accept and be ready to receive the peace and contented sobriety.

Esther G. Silver Dollar

A REASON FOR BEING

Why am I here? What am I alive for? Why can't I be happy like other people? Why does nobody love me? I'm useless!

If I could just get that job! If I could only have that woman! If I could just have that holiday! If it wasn't for my wife, my boss, my parents! If I could only afford that house, that car, that TV, that music center - or to emigrate!

What's it all about, Alfie? Poor me! God never gave me a chance. No point in going to church, they would never understand my problems. I never had time to read those books, go to those concerts, those theatres. I fell asleep in the pictures sometimes. I was so tired.

So much for logic. So much for maturity.

The desperate search for a reason for living is over now. The frantic dependence on being happy is no more. The yearning to be loved has gone, or at least is less urgent. The delegation of these personal responsibilities is no longer necessary. I know now the insanity of trying to satisfy my insatiable defects of character.

You told me that your only real problem in life had been booze. I came to identify with this. You told me what you had done and I tried to do the same. You told me what had happened to you and it began happening to me. You gave me a message and told me to pass it on if I wanted to keep it.

Being sober became a reason for being. Being happy became a simple matter of making a decision to be so and it is easier the more I try to practice these principles in all my affairs.

If I love myself well enough I need not go looking for love and I will have more to spread around. I am not, and never have been, useless, inferior or inadequate. There is nothing for me to prove in A.A. I identify with you.

Happy alcoholics don't get drunk. God grant me the humility to be happy.

Jim (Monday Akron) via Share Scotland

Be a Bulletin Booster

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THE TEN AND THE TWELVE

It seems that the Ten Commandments are becoming a standard phrase in modern terminology as "old fashioned." Today, the simple qualities of love and honesty are being cast aside and replaced with loose moral standards. More and more men and women are searching for happiness in whiskey bottles and pill boxes.

Through the years, **people** have tried to rid themselves of the old fashioned morals that were handed down from one generation to another but they found nothing that could replace God's laws. They are still the best guide for man's spiritual and character growth. It has been heard that "God is dead," and some are trying to substitute their own jungle laws for His Commandments. They reject the moral system of honesty, devoting much of their time and effort cultivating "good times," rather than the ennoblement of their character.

High school boys and girls, studying hard to get high grades and a sound education are ridiculed by classmates, and when they refuse to take part in **drinking** and marijuana orgies, they are tagged as "squares," and dropped from social activities. And too, college students are becoming too sophisticated to accept the simple code of living which was handed down by their ancestors because they feel they are too outmoded for this modern generation.

Yet, with this rebellion against God's Commandments, there will never be a public announcement that God's laws will be replaced or repealed with those more modern. Through the years, people and nations tried to modernize the laws of God but they never improved on a single one. History books are full of tragedies of men and women and even nations that tried to cut themselves away from God and His commandments. Today, our own country is deteriorating morally and spiritually. A person is no longer safe and secure in his own home or on the street, because people are living by their standards of right and wrong.

Love thy neighbor as thyself," is the principle upon which the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous is built. Dr. Bob said that the Twelve Steps can be simmered down to two words, "love and service." To clarify, the Twelve Steps were not initiated to take the place of the Ten Commandments, but to make us aware of their importance in this world of greed and selfishness.

Every generation, and rightfully so, can change and form the laws of living but the moral law of God stands supreme. Parliament may legislate, dictators may decree, cultural standards may fluctuate, but no one can rightly make evil good, or hate better than love.

Despite the fact that we are living in an age of confusion where it seems that the purpose in life is only to indulge in revelry, there are **still** those that shine as a light in a dark world. The founders of our fellowship followed the precepts of the Ten Commandments, for they knew that those who faithfully live within God's laws will grow in character.

Today, no man or woman has to surrender his or her life to the bottle if they follow the simple moral principals so clearly stated in the Ten Commandments and the Twelve Steps. We will progress only if we build our character on the solid recognition that every human being should be loved for his virtues, though we are all sinners and have many faults. Perhaps this is the ultimate meaning of the phrase: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

Ed B. Akron, Ohio

IN THE BEGINNING

Twelve is really a magical number, a number full of tradition and power. We have the 12 Apostles, the 12 Tribes, and now the 12 Steps.

But in the beginning there were only six. In the words of **AA Comes** of Age, p. 160: "Since Ebby's visit to me in the fall of **1934** we had gradually evolved what we called 'the word-of-mouth program.' Most of the basic ideas had come from the Oxford Groups, William James and Dr. Silkworth. Though subject to considerable variation, it all boiled down into a pretty consistent procedure which comprised six steps. These were approximately as follows:

1. We admitted that we were licked, that we were powerless over alcohol.
2. We made a moral inventory of our defects or sins.
3. We confessed or shared our shortcomings with another person in confidence.
4. We made restitution to all those we had harmed by our drinking.
5. We tried to help **other's** alcoholics with no thought of reward in money or prestige.
6. We prayed to whatever God we thought there was for power to practice these precepts.

As you can see, the heart and spirit were there-it was just a matter of time, experience and inspiration until we arrived finally at our present recovery program: SIX WAS GOOD BUT TWELVE IS BEST!

TECHNIQUES FOR THINKING

1. Keep life simple.
2. Practice being satisfied.
3. Beware of indecision.
4. Practice cheerfulness.
5. Learn to like people.
6. Live and Let Live.
7. Use adversity.
8. Don't take yourself so seriously.
9. Have a sense of humor.
10. Practice objectivity.
11. Tolerate your own mistakes.
12. Forgive yourself.

ARE YOU PLANNING TO MOVE?

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IT WILL HELP YOU AND IT WILL HELP US.



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VOL. XL11-No. 5

IT WORK'S

So, you'd like to know how AA has helped me? It's helped me in so many, many ways that I'm not sure where to begin or where to end. First, **AA** helped me to gain trust, and faith in my fellow human beings. I spent a lifetime, it seemed not want to get close to anyone for fear they would find out the "real me" inside and hate me as I already did. I did not trust anyone completely my first year sober in AA. I'd always in the past, associated with people that were not very honest or trustworthy and I judged others in AA with the same measuring stick I'd measured others by. It took a long time for me to come out from behind the **walls** I'd built for myself in my self inflicted prison. I had a very hard time staying sober or developing a comfortable, happy sobriety until the time came that I reached out to someone else in the program and honestly confided in them exactly how much I was hurting, or how many real fears I had inside. The magical think about it was that the more I shared with others how I felt, the more they also trusted me and shared with me and the easier it became for me to do so. Yes, AA has placed a trust inside me that years of therapy, religion and many other **therapeutic** devices attempted to do but never succeeded in doing.

What else has AA done for me? It's helped me to place a value upon myself as a woman. Before AA, I thought I had to be a martyr and let everyone step on me. I believed I had to live in someone else's shadow, to help them pursue and reach their goals, never my own, after all, I thought I wasn't worth the time or effort it took to make something positive out of the mess I'd become. Yes, AA has given me the desire, strength and confidence to reach out and **persue** my own goals in life. I am now in my second year of college and I hope to someday acquire my doctorate in psychology. I was a 33 year old high school drop out, **alcoholic** woman who'd been married and divorced 3 times when I entered AA. I didn't want to live, I had no goals, no reasons to continue my life. (I thought).

AA has "done for me what I could not do for myself". It has molded me into a worthwhile, functioning, decent person. I have a long way to go to get where I want to be in my program but I must never forget, how far I have come. Anything I ever acquire in life, I owe the thanks to AA, my higher power and the people He has put in my **life** to guide me to where I am today. Oh, yes I also must remember, I was the one that had to do the ground work no one else could do it for me (and some tried) I had to put forth the effort to pick up and implement the tools this great program gave to me. As one old timer says: "If you pray for potatoes, you better pick up a hoe!"

A very, very grateful recovering alcoholic woman,
Kathy

"ITS NICE TO BE WANTED BUT YOU GOT TO WANT TO BE NICE!"

GARY

YOU CAN'T BE FORGOTTEN

My wife and I left Cleveland on Thursday, February 2nd and did not have the opportunity to personally say goodbye to all of our dear friends of the fellowship. My wife is 76 and I am 81. We can no longer think or move as swiftly as we used to.

We take this opportunity to say a very warm "adios" and to thank you for all the help I received in that area which I sincerely appreciated very deeply. At our age our health was becoming rather uncertain and we decided to move near our daughter here in California.

Again, we wish to thank you from the bottom of our hearts, and may God be with all of you at all times.

Your Amigo,
Dick P.

FUND DRIVE IS UNDERWAY

When you support the Downtown Office, you are doing an important **12th-Step** job. Your dollars make it possible for hundreds of calls for help to be received and turned over to groups. Your dollars provide a central place for those seeking help and AA visitors to call; a clearing house for our AA literature; a source for speakers; a telephone answering service which handles almost **20,000** calls a year. No single individual could do such widespread good. But, as an individual your **dollars** actually do this tremendous job!

And the opportunity is again almost here. During March, Greater Cleveland's AA will be asked to contribute to the support of the District Office. This money pays the salaries of a full time Secretary and her assistant; office rent, telephone, electric light, night-time telephone answering service, literature, printing, postage, and other mailing costs.

Last year 338 groups and 2840 individual AA members pledged money to support the work of your Office. This year it is hoped that even more of the Greater Cleveland groups can see their way clear to making a group pledge. Experience has shown that the combined effort of the groups is the greatest single factor in raising the money necessary for this important work.

As in the past years, you and your respective groups will be contacted for your practical help. If each group will assume their proportionate share of the load, and if individuals who are financially able will continue to supplement group contributions-we can succeed.

It is our fervent hope that District Office may be able to continue the invaluable services for which it was organized almost **40** years ago. We all know how AA has grown-let's see to it that the important services of your Office can keep pace!

Thank you, in advance, for your understanding and assistance.



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Harry D., Founder and Editor 1892-1968

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CLEVELAND, OHIO

ALL GROUP REPRESENTATIVES WELCOME
BE INFORMED

9TH ANNUAL N.E.O.G.S. MINI-CONFERENCE
MARCH 23, 24 & 25, 1984

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MAY 5, 1984

SPEAKER: LIZ B. JAMAICA, N.Y.

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FOOD FOR ACTION!

HOME GROUP? Oh yea, I got one. It's ah, ah, wait a minute. I got it written down here somewhere. **WHAT?** Hey just hold on one second, I write down all those important things. You know it's my way of self-discipline.

Oh! here it is! No wait, that's not it. Huh, ain't that something, I know I have a home group. I remember signing the roster, and I remember all those warm people, who shared and cared when I was new. I remember that old timer who said "come hell or high water, if you can't reach me any other way, you'll always catch me here Monday, at my **meeting**. Oh, may be I wrote it down on, well let's see that's not it. You know it's "not easy" when you become a responsible person, to remember just where you put everything. What am I looking for again? **YOUR HOME GROUP!**

Fresh Start Frank

**WE MAKE A LIVING BY WHAT WE
GET-BUT WE MAKE A LIFE BY
WHAT WE GIVE.**

DISTRICT OFFICE CORNER

We have not been with you since last year - November, we think, but it's been much too long - so we need to have a little visit now to tell you what has been going on here at the office.

The beginning of each New Year just automatically brings on a real flurry of activity because, at this time, we start planning for the May Intergroup Dinner and work begins on all that needs to be done for our annual Fund Drive Campaign that will be held during the month of March.

First of all, we had our raffle for Intergroup Dinner tickets on January 23rd and tickets are now available here at the office. Sounds like a great evening! A.A. speaker, **Alanon** speaker, Dinner and Dance. Music will be furnished by Eddie Platt. This is the 33rd year for this affair and we think it's one **beautiful** experience whether you are brand new or a long-time member. Why not talk it up a little and come join us for the evening? If you have any questions - you can call the office -241-7387.

We are all happy with our bright, new quarters and, if you haven't been down to see us yet - why not drop in? The pot is always on!

Seems we're always addressing the members in our area in most of our "Comers". We certainly don't want to leave out those of you who now live in different parts of the country. We love hearing from you so why not drop us a line and let us know where your Cleveland area Sobriety has taken you and how things are going? Anything you can share will be most welcome and those of us here who know you and think of you often will know too that you haven't forgotten us.. **.share** with us a little, bearing in mind that "a good example has twice the value of good advice". . **.see** we are still after you to do your 12th Step work. **THINK ABOUT IT!**

YOUR TRUSTED SERVANTS

BIG BOOK 'IFs'

There are many places in the Big Book where we are presented with a contingency, an "if this..then that" sort of situation. The Twelve Promises, starting on the bottom of page 83 are an example: "If we are pain-staking about this phase of our development (then) we will be amazed before we are half way through."

See if you can find these others examples in the Bin Book:

- 1) "If **we** were to live, we had to be **free** of anger."
- 2) If the owner of a business is to be successful, he cannot fool himself about values."
- 3) "What we really have is a daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition."
- 4) "If our testimony helps sweep away prejudice, enables you to think honestly, encourages you to search diligently within yourself, then, if you wish, you can join us on the "Broad, Broad Highway."
- 5) "If we are planning to stop drinking, there must be no reserve of any kind, nor any lurking notion that someday we will be immune to alcohol."

If you look for these in the Big Book, you will at least be reading the book, and I'm sure you will be able to find many more examples on your own.

Anonymous-Phoenix, AZ

-LEADERSHIP IN A.A.—

The whole concept of leadership in A.A. is based on the 2nd Tradition, which states in part "Our leaders are but trusted servants that do not govern." But no matter how carefully design our structure, principles and relationships, or apportion authority and responsibility, the operating results can be no better than the performance of those who lead and make it work. No society can function well without able leadership and A.A. is no exception.

True qualities of leadership in A.A. are dedication to A.A., emotional stability, open-mindedness and aptitudes to deal with service assignments. Somewhere in our literature is a statement, "Our leaders do not drive by mandate, they lead by example." In effect we are saying "Act for us, but don't boss us." An A.A. leader, therefore, is a person who can put principles, plans and policies into such dedicated and effective action that the rest of us want to back that person up and help with the job. When a leader power drives us, we rebel; on the other hand, if he exercises no judgment of his own, he isn't a leader at all.

A good leader originates ideas for the improvement of our Fellowship and its services. He is not resistant to suggestions for changes which will improve services. It can never be "Let's have it our way, or no way at all." A good leader is not a politico who becomes a people pleaser. Instead he is a statesman who can compromise with an adverse group conscience.

There is no place in good leadership for personal ambition or the desire for prestige or applause. A leader who accepts the responsibility as an ego trip is not performing his job. Dedication to the good of A.A. as a whole is of primary importance and the good leader of A.A. has learned to place principles even before his own personality.

For example, at the Group level frequently a new group secretary is chosen because "it will be good for her." The principle which should be considered here is "What is good for the Group and for A.A. as a whole?" The same principle should apply at the Intergroup Board level. Qualified people exist out there. Let's find them, elect them, and trust them to serve us.

Dear U. High & Dry

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OUR FAVORITE HEROES

We don't find too many heroes in this world but there are ever plenty of heroics. The guy who plays to the grandstand isn't nearly as important as the fellow who lays down the bunt. The grandstander will probably strike out, but the fellow that bunts will sacrifice another man to an advanced position.

In A.A. we have our own favorite brand of heroes, and none of them got that way by sitting on cushions. At the top of the list we put the men and women who come back - come back and are willing to admit there has been insincerity, that there has been no complete surrender, that there has been a lack of faith or a practice of it. It takes almost a saintly humility to admit these shortcomings, for it takes a courageous soul to reenter battle and to go on and win. Give credit to the man or woman who can shake off the ashes of defeat and we'll show you a hero or a heroine.

There are others, however, We've met the man whose wife left him after he came into A.A., not before. His life is bedeviled by an apparently endless chain of adversities which are not of his own making. Yet, with every blow, he becomes firmer in his resolutions. He matches every reverse with hours of unselfish aid to someone who has met with greater reverses.

Give me the girl who lost her husband and job because she preferred a sober way of life. Give me the courage that rests in her heart and give me the hope that lights up in her eyes. Husbands and jobs are important but only relatively so. There are things of greater importance. We pay tribute to the girl with the vision to know the difference.

Give us the man who is along in years. How easy to say: "why change now?" For he knows that a few years, one year, one day or even one hour in his new way of living, can bring rewards that he could not attain in three scores of synthetic living.

Give us the young man who can conjure a rational picture of the next five years of life, and can then make a proper choice - the young man who will forego what others may enjoy, but what to him will lead to oblivion.

Give us the man or woman whose charity goes beyond the word stage. Words can be found in the dictionary; charity is found in the field of action. Words can be formed by a facile tongue; acts of charity are performed by busy hands, busy feet and wakeful eyes. A great poet once described words, something like this: "Words are like leaves, where they most abound, little sign of fruit is apt to be found."

Charity is the plow that makes the furrow, the harrow that reduces the lump soil to mulct, the cultivator that destroys the weeds and shovel that refills the gullies after a storm has struck.

The Missing Link

A GENTLEMAN

One day I approached a building entrance behind a gray-haired, distinguished-looking man. A young lady arrived at the same time and he held the door open for her. She said, "Don't hold the door for me just because I'm a lady." The man was silent for a moment, then said, "I didn't open the door because you are a lady. I opened it because I'm a gentleman."

BEFORE AND AFTER

What strange behavior we find in the life of an alcoholic before A.A. and after he enters it and finds sobriety. He was once the most unpredictable person in our society. An example, when he was fired from his job for losing too much time from work, he would go to his boss with tears in his eyes and solemnly swear that he would work every day if he were given another chance. And out of the goodness of his heart and sometimes at the risk of losing his own job, the boss would give him another chance.

But the very first day, he got drunk and didn't show up. Too, he had promised his wife that he would be with her at the hospital on the day of her major operation, but when that day came, he was in a bar crying in his beer. When a member of the family died, he would make his appearance at the funeral drunk, embarrassing the whole family. He spoiled his daughter's wedding when he came to church staggering drunk while the minister was performing the ceremony.

He did his utmost to destroy himself and those who loved him. After a few drinks it was easy to abandon the responsibilities of a father and husband and use his family and friends to support his uncontrollable appetite for drink instead of regarding them as partners in work and love. The words, "work and love," were dropped from his vocabulary, not only in thought but also in action. Yet, with all his faults, he had a deep longing to love and be loved, but he could not control his actions because alcohol had taken over all control.

Now this same man after he came into A.A. will get out of bed at three and four o'clock on a cold morning to help another human being whom he has never seen or met before. This man will be touched by human ills and bring help, hope and guidance and encouragement to the sick person and his family. This is the same father and husband who stole the last dollar to buy himself a drink when there was not enough food in the home to feed his wife and the children. This is the same father whose children ran to their mother for protection when they saw him stagger home in an ugly mood.

Now, this same father will sit up all night with his wife and tenderly help to take care of that sick child who not long ago was afraid of him and ran to mother. This same child now, will extend his or her little arms to him and say, "hold me daddy." And this is the same woman, his wife who shed many tears and lived in constant fear and dread, not so much for her own life, but for the lives of her children. She is the same woman who never lost faith in God nor love for the man she married. This is the same woman who never ceased to pray for her man, who had gone astray.

Why is it that the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous is so successful in rehabilitating the sick alcoholic when everything else failed? Perhaps it is because A.A. is like a mother hen, spreading her wings across the world to protect the saint and sinner from their own brutal self-indulgence. A.A. is will aware of human frailties but the amazing thing is that God is able to work wonders through this fellowship of men and women, that have many characters defects.

It is the work of the alcoholic that gives hope to those with our disease. If we could see the brutality and destruction wrought by man, we might well despair, for the picture

would be dark and bleak, indeed. Thank God for this wonderful Fellowship of A.A. that rescues men and women out of the wreckage of the past. They who will now go out and spend both time and effort so that others may live.

Ed. B. Akron, O.

LEARN TO LET GO...

One of the most practical and absolutely truthful bits of philosophy that has appeared in a long time, was published in "Medical Talk," on the wisdom of "letting go."

The writer says:

If you want to be healthy morally, mentally and physically, just "Let go". Let go of the little bothers of everyday life, the irritations and the petty vexations that cross your path daily. Don't take them up and nurse them, pet them, and brood over them. They are not worth while. "Let them go."

That little hurt you got from your friend, perhaps it wasn't intended, perhaps it was, but never mind, let it go. Refuse to think about it.

"Let go" that feeling of hatred you have for another, the jealousy, the envy, the malice, let go all such thoughts. Sweep them out of your mind, and you will be surprised what a cleaning and rejuvenating effect it will have upon you, both physically and mentally. Let them go; you house them at deadly risk.

But the big troubles, the bitter disappointments, the deep wrongs and the heartbreaking sorrows, tragedies of life, what about them? Why, just let them go, too. Drop them, softly maybe, but surely. Put away all regret and bitterness, and let sorrow be only a softening influence. Yes, let them go, too, and make the most of the future.

Then that little pet ailment you have been hanging on to and talking about, let it go. It will be good riddance. You have treated it royally, but abandon it; let it go. Talk about health instead, and health will come. Quit nursing that pet ailment, and let it go.

It is not so hard after once you get used to the habit of it-letting go of these things. You will find it such an easy way to get rid of the things that may mar and embitter life that you will enjoy letting them go. You will find the world such a beautiful place. You will find it beautiful because you will be free to enjoy it-free in mind and body.

Learn to let go. As you value health of body and peace of mind, let go-just simply let go.

(Reprinted from Sun-Dry, El Paso, Texas)

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VOL. XLII-No. 6

Do YOU KNOW? WHY WE PASS THE BASKET

When I was very new in A.A. I knew they passed a basket, after each meeting but in my fogged mind, it never **occured** to me "WHY" I didn't have any money anyway, and that was o.k. - My **sponser** said not to worry about it, I **was** there to learn how to stop drinking "One Day At a Time" and I shouldn't miss my meetings because I was broke.

After I dried out a little I was told 'No question is to dumb to ask' so I asked about the basket. I was told that we are self supporting through our own contributions and do not accept outside donations. Out of the contributions in the basket our group paid the rent, gas, lights, the tons of coffee we drank, gave to G.S.O., the State Area Assembly, Central Office, and bought literature, to be given to new comers to carry the message. (By then I was able to put in a dollar and felt good about it, even that wasn't much compared to what I spent on alcohol.)

Today I give more than I can sometimes, because I know I'm supporting my group and this in turn helps carry the message to the still suffering alcoholic. Sure beats supporting a beer joint.

I AM ALCOHOL

May I introduce myself?

I am alcohol.

For most of you, I'll be ever easy and benign; warming your friendships, enhancing your love, toasting your victories, and serving your worship.

But never say I didn't warn you. For a few, I have reserved a special hell.

My ubiquitous cobra hed strikes with selective fury.

I'll spring your brilliance, and turn your brain to mud.

Soar on my wings, and I will dash you back to earth.

I will lift your heart, and bind your soul with chains of anguish.

I'll build you a fortune, and topple it with the devil's laugh.

Listen to my siren song, and with lyric steps I'll lead you through echoing halls of terror you can't conceive.

I'll assuage your pain, and abandon you to despair.

I will mock you, and ever race my fugitive enigma just beyond the doctor's knowing, the cleric's heart, the poet's reach, and my victims bewilderment.

If you touch me, I will kill you.

Ignore me, and I die.

I am alcohol.

Want to try?

John L. Cordes

EPilogue:

Shortly after **composing** the above, the author signed himself out of Brighton Hospital, and went home to commit suicide. "I am alcohol. Want to try?"

'THINGS DONT GET BETTER, WE GET BETTER'

How often have I heard at meetings that if I stick with the program "things will get better". At a recent anniversary celebration a speaker, recounting the difficulties he had experienced during the first months of his sobriety and how, since then his circumstances had constantly improved; stated "and it keeps getting better".

Yet how many times have I heard said that "things don't get better-we get better"?

Where's the tie-in between these two seemingly conflicting ideas?

In me it's expressed in the Serenity Prayer; asking God to grant me serenity to accept the things I cannot change...the courage to change the things I **can...**and having (or relying on friends in the Program to provide) the wisdom to distinguish between the two.

In my life "things" have not really changed much. All the potential hassles at work, at home, with the IRS, or on the Freeway, with the loudmouth on the block, the obnoxious drunk at the party **are** still there. I'm fairly confident that if I changed jobs, or spouses, or neighborhoods, or social milieu, they would not disappear. They seem to be facts of life, that is, things I cannot change.

Nevertheless, in sobriety, I am able, with God's grace, to handle most of these "things" without making them worse and "things" seem better because I don't turn a moment of pi-que at the office into a job-threatening battle with the boss; a spat with my spouse isn't likely to become an "irreconcilable difference" in a divorce **proceeding**; nor does an error by either me or the tax people turn into a gut-tearing personal battle between me and the auditor.

I can see this in other ways too. For example, my home life seems better because I no longer blame my spouse and kids for my misery. I'm more comfortable in my profession since I realized that "they" (the system, the bureaucracy, the old boys network) were not out to get me. In neither case have "things" changed, but my attitudes, outlooks and my expectations have.

'Unity Lifeline'

Falls Church, VA A.A.

'FROM CATIPILLAR TO A BUTTERFLY'

After coming into AA I learned about pain & suffering & then anger & then resentments and now pride.

It's just one dam defect after another!

But I love my AA, because I'm feeling emotions for the first time and I'm growing to be the person God would have me be.

Dolores T.

CENTRAL BULLETIN



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Harry D., Founder and Editor 1892-1968

VOL. 42 MARCH 1984 NO. 6

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IN MEMORIAM

AL SCHRAMKE, A active member of our fellowship. Al attended many groups regularly. Our sympathy to the family.

Dear AA Members,

Today I went to an AA meeting with a friend. I went just to find out what it was like.

I don't have a drinking problem, I'm one of the lucky ones that can't even stand the smell.

I'm glad that I went, I found that everyone there had a deep concern for their fellow human beings. Although they did not know me I was welcomed by most of the people, with a handshake and a name.

The church that I attend doesn't welcome people as warmly as AA members do.

I think every one could profit if they lived by the AA philosophy.

Keep up the good work.

God Bless You
Nancy Koran

To be humble is not to grovel before man, neither is it to be the doormat of society. Humility is a consciousness that we are the children of God, the recognition of a Power greater than ourselves, and a willingness to let that Power control our will and our lives.

Life is not what we know and plan it to be, but what we trust in and dare to do.

Martin Niemoeller

ROSY PICTURE

"Maybe it's a mistake to tell a prospect that joining AA will solve anyone's drinking problem." That amazing observation was made by one of our favorite old-timers on a recent visit to our office.

"In my opinion," he went on, "many of us sponsors paint too rosy a picture to our prospect, and neglect to point out the pitfalls.

"Many of them actually have the impression that by joining AA, after a period of sobriety, they can then become 'social drinkers' against-not drunks like they used to be, but 'controlled drinkers'!"

Listening to him relate his recent experiences, we took stock of some of our own latest trials. We have learned a valuable lesson in trying not to be too pontifical-for the much beleaguered, desperate prospect has learned the trick of listening politely without hearing, an art he developed as family and bosses and judges have invoked their censure on him.

Of course, we try to paint a rosy picture. How else can we arouse a spark of desire in the heart and mind of the prospect who is seeking an answer? Why should he forsake a habit which had always given him oblivion?

Sure, He's in trouble. He's been told that maybe we can help him. His job is gone. His family life is insecure. But to quit drinking ENTIRELY!!! He's sure he can't.

Placing him in a hospital or in a nursing home, in our visitor's and our opinion, is not necessarily the best way to impress the newcomer into the program, tho it is the easiest. For there he will be visited by the sponsor's chosen AA as well as many who make hospital calls with regularity. There, too, during the several days of treatment he will be among understanding people and a-way from the tears and fears of those whose faith had been shattered.

In the hospital or the nursing home, his medication and drinks will be controlled by skillful and firm hands. Treatment at home is often haphazard, except where the patient has a sympathetic but firm wife who will not be swayed by the alcoholic's tricks away from explicit instructions of the doctor or the sponsor.

Getting AA "the hard way" has made many of our members more secure. In this hellish period he has learned to say 'No' to temptation many times even though he was sure he would die by refusing it.

Muscles are developed by regular exercise and regularly exercising the "NO" muscle every day, every hour, every minute if necessary, he grows stronger and stronger, until his common sense asserts itself.

"How silly I was to think a drink would solve my problem," he says to himself. "Thank God, I don't HAVE to drink anymore! I'm LIVING now-not just existing!"

Let's warn our prospects from joining the growing class of "slippers," who would welcome another in their ranks only to prove that AA was not for real HE Men but for sissies, thereby taking the spotlight away from them as weaklings and a discredit to AA.

Central Bulletin
April 1959

NO MUSTS

Too often we hear the flat statement—"There are no musts in AA." This is true, only in the sense that the AA 12 steps are not an enforceable law within the confines of our legal structure-nor a sentence imposed and applied force.

Usually we apply the phrase as a sop to our egos-for the simple reason that our minds have not been completely cleared of the reservations and the fuzzy rationalization that no one can discipline us!

So by twisting our thinking a bit we can claim—"there are no musts," but only on the basis that no one can change our thinking through force. If it is our screwy and confused thinking that makes us drink-and makes our lives unmanageable-and if the way we change this type of thinking to make our lives manageable is through application of the 12 Steps-then there are a lot of musts.

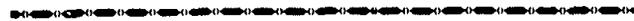
The only guarantee we have-the only assurance we have-is the degree in which we put the AA principles into practice in our lives. The Big Books says, "These are the steps we took"-(past tense)—so the results are not based on theory but actual and sustained action that demanded rigorous honesty, willingness and effort. If we are willing to settle for less than happy, sober, well ordered lives, then we can truly say there are no musts.. .and the only one who can decide whether there are no musts is you-for you are the guy who must abide by the decision in suffering further-or in living the wonderful new way of life through complete acceptance of AA principles.

High and Dry, Seattle

A man should never be ashamed to say he has been in the wrong, which is but saying in other words, he is wiser today than he was yesterday. -Pope.

TO THE STILL SUFFERING ALCOHOLIC WE SAY, "GIVE IT A TRY. YOU HAVE NOTHING TO LOSE."

Customer to bartender: "The judge gave me a suspended sentence and told me to see someone about my drinking. SO here I am."



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WHY?

Why do some make it in AA and others fail? Is it because they really can't? Or is it because they are not willing to pay the price?

We can only surmise-for we can never know for certain-what lies deep inside another human being that determines the basic and true nature of his individuality. We cannot evaluate the inner qualities on external evidence!

However, it is our firm conviction that only the true psychotic might find the road to recovery (via the 12 Steps) impossible. It is our belief that only one thing induces any of us to take that first drink-our distorted thinking!

Therefore, in order to eliminate the thought-processes that inevitably lead to the first drink, something must be introduced into the life of the individual that will influence and change the thought patterns.

the only thing we know that can do this is a self-imposed program of thought and action, such as is embodied in the 12 Steps of AA. It is accepted, understood and applied, this program CAN bring about a complete personality change. This may well prove to be a herculean task-but what is easy in an alcoholic's thinking?

While there are many negative factors that must ultimately be eliminated, we believe the greatest deterrents are: Egotism, Dishonesty and Indolence.

Egotism, or false pride, causes us to pretend to be what we are not, arrogantly refusing to admit our weaknesses and shortcomings. Being self-centered, we believe only we can run the show. We arrogantly reject advice.

Dishonesty, lying to ourselves and to others. Rationalizing, justifying our selfish, self-gratifying behaviour and ignoring the heartaches, misery and ruin which follow its wake. Silly excuses run easily out of our mouths, fooling none but ourselves.

Indolence, or laziness, mental and physical, is the third of the average alcoholic type. This type accepts the Big Book from his sponsor, (he might even buy it) but doesn't read it because it requires thought and concentration. He fails to attend meetings regularly because it interferes with his personal comforts.. . television, radio, getting out of his favorite chair or off the sofa. He can't or won't spare an hour or two with his group and finds a ready excuse whenever he is called upon to make a Twelfth Step call. He's usually guilty of pro crastination, rarely, if ever, finishing anything he starts.

Perhaps we can't WILL these attitudes out of our minds, but we can GIVE ourselves completely to the AA program, whether we understand it or not, or even believe it in the beginning. AA as suggested in the Big Book is as effective for the alky as is insulin prescribed by a doctor for a diabetic. It isn't necessary that the diabetic know the chemical composition of insulin nor understand the chemical changes that take place in his body in order for it to work effectively. The point is both do the job required if taken as prescribed.

If we are hurting our loved ones, jeopardizing our jobs, our health and our social relations, or bring shame to our families and ourselves continually, because of drinking, then we had better evaluate the cost of our indulgences.

Is it worth it to demand the right to drink, if it increases in us the fears, phobias, anxieties, worries, frustrations and failures?

Do we really mean it when we say we CAN'T, or do we mean WON'T? Don't let's sell ourselves short!

NECESSITY FOR HONESTY

A short time ago, I was asked to speak on a panel where the topic for discussion was "Necessity for Honesty." It was a well chosen and opportune subject as anything dealing with honesty is vital for us **alcoholics**. We ignored honesty during our **drinking** days as it would have interfered with our drinking life and therefore, we had no place for it during those daily struggles.

Due to our compulsive habit and our lack of control over it, we could not stomach an honest approach to life. Rather, we self imposed deceit and deception its in place, prone to lie, cheat and even steal, to further our habit and to cover up our wrongs and shortcomings. We lived in a pressure cooker from which we could not extricate ourselves, kidding ourselves and attempting to fool others. Our families, friends, and neighbors, our bosses and all whom we came in contact with, easily saw through our mask of deceit.

Some of us even came to believe our lies during those years and we lost all sight of right or wrong. Right or wrong no longer seemed to bother what conscience we were able to retain.

But finally there came the day and whether we were forced, pushed, or entered A.A. of our own volition, which makes no difference now, what mattered is that we have arrived. Many of our readers have enjoyed a lengthy sobriety, some a very long sobriety and some have joined us just recently. None of us, however, would be here today, had we not gotten honest with ourselves.

Honesty as we know it today, goes somewhat beyond eliminating the lies, cheating and stealing once practiced. It is now a vital pattern in our daily lives, in order to maintain a happy, contented sobriety. Our sobriety best never be accepted as something automatic, regardless of the days, months, or years, just because we have stepped over the threshold and through the door into A.A. Being honest affords us more than just being sober. It avails us other benefits in daily living.

1. It has granted us the opportunity to get sober.
2. It is mose essential and helpful in staying sober.
3. We are a better person because of it and we have learned to like ourselves.
4. Honesty has no bad side effects, all are positive.
5. It enables others to take our word at face value, we are trusted, proving we are once more respected.
6. Every morning, we can look the man in the glass right in the eye and need not turn our head aside.
7. We no longer have to remember what we said yesterday, the day before, last week or month, as was once the case.

Honesty is the backbone of our character, all good things start with it. There are no replacements or substitutions for it and such an attempt would prove to be foolish foly and could prove fatal to our sobriety.

Only a part of our day is spent in A.A. activity, at meetings, on committees, sponsoring and such-a greater part is spent on the outside. We must practice being honest at all times in order to make each day a disciplined and productive one, which will make each day a lesser task.

We are fully aware of what being honest has done for us. Compare it with the dismal life we once led and there can be no question what course we must continue to follow daily.

Anonymous

(Thanks to the Akron Intergroup News)

SINCERITY vs. HYPOCRISY

We took a look around the group at our last meeting and as our gaze rested on each individual we concentrated for just a moment. It's really amazing to note the various types of characters that finally accept the AA program. There are some whom we could classify as naturals. They are the kind of fellows whom one would expect to embrace a sober way of living, once they found a way that made it possible for them. They probably always realized that they were completely out of gear, and hated every moment of their drinking life. And once they were steered through an AA door, everything was duck soup for them. But there were a lot of the other type-the type whose turn to sobriety will always be a source of amazement. They are the fellows of whom it was said there was no hope. They are the fellows who apparently never were bothered too much with remorse; fellows who apparently never gave a thought to moral or spiritual values; fellows who never dreamed of asking for help, or thinking they were in need of any. But there they were, the naturals and the hopeless cases, stone sober and completely happy about the whole deal.

We did note one thing, however, that applied to all the people in the room. There was a common denominator. And that was sincerity. We believe that anyone can make the program-except one type of individual. And that type is the hypocrite. No **alcoholic** who is also a hypocrite has ever, or will ever make the program. He may come to a meeting, a dozen meetings, or he may even go a year or more. But eventually and inevitably, he will get drunk. No alcoholic who will admit to his sponsor and to the group that he is an alcoholic, but who deliberately harbors some mental reservations, can make the program. He will get drunk. No alcoholic who will piously proclaim his faith in and dependence on a Higher Power for public effect, but who refuses to live his private life in accordance with what is implied in such a proclamation, will maintain his sobriety. Eventually he will get drunk. Hypocrites always end up in failure, because they are dishonest. And dishonest people are never successful people. The terms cannot be reconciled.-The *Missing Link*.

TO TOHSE NOW SOBER AND HAPPY, WE SAY,
 'YOU ARE PROOF THAT IT WORKS.
 DO NOT GET CARELESS OR COMPLACENT.
 STAY ACTIVE!"

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VOL. XLII-No. 7

CHOOSE SECRETARY CAREFULLY

Please accept this as a suggestion • but an important one. When it comes time to “elect” - “sandbag” (however your group does it) a new GROUP SECRETARY, please give this action sober and careful thought.

In the first place, let us all remember that to be asked to be a group secretary is an HONOR. You are in effect saying to this person “We respect you, and we feel that you have the interest of our Group at heart, so we are asking you to be of ‘love and service’ to the group by accepting the secretary offer.”

Please do not take the attitude that your group secretary is really **not** very important to your group. Do not try to drop the job on a well-intentioned newcomer to A.A., who accepts through ignorance of the requirements for a group secretary, or accepts **so that he** or she may continue an “ego trip” that **they** should be attempting to end. Never appoint a “slipper”, newly recovered, to this position of trust because, as I have so often heard, “It will be good for him.” To do this says that you do not value your Group or the help it has been to you over the months or even years.

What your group **always** needs is a Secretary who will be good for the Group, who will take this job seriously, who will arrange for chairmen and speakers in advance of the meeting night, who will see that the coffee and refreshments are at hand, who will in fact show gratitude by doing the best job **he can**.

I hope this doesn't sound preachy, but I have seen a lot of great Groups go down the “drain of neglect” over the years, for the reason that no one cared enough to see to it that there was a devoted and trustworthy Secretary for the Group.

I hope that this does NOT apply to your group...but if it does, be your group's conscience in this area.

Paul G.
San Francisco Area A.A.

TIDBITS

Fears are normal expressions of emotions. If a tiger jumped into the AA meeting I would have fear. Unfounded fears are caused by the abuse of alcohol. I was afraid to pump gas at the self service station. I was too shaky and didn't have enough confidence. I was afraid to face the gas station attendant.

When you learn how to fail, you will learn how to succeed! If you get up and comment at an AA meeting, you may shake, stutter and not make sense. It's OK in AA! Next time it will be better. I blank out all the time. Four years **commenting**: I still blank out. I change topics too fast but it doesn't bother me anymore as I know now I never will be a perfect speaker, or a perfect anything.

Ralph W.

POSITIVELY NEGATIVE

- We drank for joy and became miserable.
- We drank for sociability and became argumentative.
- We drank for sophistication and become obnoxious.
- We drank for friendship and made enemies.
- We drank for sleep and awakened exhausted.
- We drank for strength and felt weak.
- We drank to feel exhilaration and ended up depressed.
- We drank for “medicinal purposes” and acquired **health** problems.
- We drank to get calmed down and ended up with the shakes.
- We drank for confidence and became afraid.
- We drank to make conversation flow more easily and the words came out slurred and incoherent.
- We drank to diminish our problems and saw them **multi**ply.
- We drank to feel heavenly and ended up feeling like hell.
- We drank to cope with life and invited death.

Dear “AA” Friends:

What do you expect of your sponsor, and what does your sponsor expect of you?

The statements I make in this letter are my own opinions-and not necessarily the opinions of Alcoholics Anonymous.

I think that when a person is searching for a sponsor, he should find a person who he can trust and respect, and that person should have a good brand of sobriety. A good sponsor will not always tell us what we want to hear, but instead will tell us what we need to hear. The person you ask may not accept your offer for many reasons but the most important reason, if he is a good sponsor, is that he does not have his own house in order at the present time.

You may think that your sponsor expects too much of you, but you must remember you are the one who wants to get sober. The sponsor is already sober. A good sponsor will insist you keep the cork in the bottle, go to a meeting every day or night for ninety days, and read the “Big Book”, “Twelve and Twelve” and all the pamphlets you can get your hands on. Most of **all**, your sponsor will insist on your being honest-not only with yourself but with your sponsor, as well as with others.

Remember that your sponsor is a winner and you can be too.

Reprinted from Oklahoma AA
General Service Newsletter

SAY HELLO!!

“Doc” D. would like to hear or see his friends from the fellowship. Call 251-2018. Address 4037 W. 160th St. Cleveland, Ohio.



Published monthly by the Cleveland Central Committee of A.A., a non-profit fellowship dedicated to service. Address all letters to Central Bulletin, 940 Rockefeller Bldg 614 Superior Ave N W., Cleveland, Ohio 44113 Subscription price - \$3.50 per Year

Harry D., Founder and Editor 1692-1966

VOL. 42 APRIL 1984 NO. 7

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING

TUESDAY, MAY 1ST, 1984—8:00 P.M.

OLD STONE CHURCH • PUBLIC SQUARE
CLEVELAND, OHIO
ALL GROUP REPRESENTATIVES WELCOME
BE INFORMED

INTERGROUP DINNER-DANCE
MAY 5, 1984

SPEAKER: LIZ B. JAMAICA, N.Y.
\$13.00 PER PERSON

28TH ANNUAL A.A.-OHIO STATE
GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE
JULY 20TH, 21ST AND 22ND, 1984

BOND COURT HOTEL-CLEVELAND, OHIO
REGISTRATIONS: OHIO GSC
P.O. BOX 14548-CLEVELAND, OHIO 44114

WESTERN PA. AREA
"WEEKEND OF SHARING"
JUNE 29, 30 AND JULY 1, 1984
SLIPPERY ROCK UNIV.

INFO: COMMITTEE, P.O. BOX 11296
PI-ITSBURG, PA. 15238
PHONE: (412) 761-5368

IN MEMORIAM

CLARENCE SYDNER, Elder member of our fellowship. He brought A.A. to Cleveland from Akron in 1938. He was a power of example to many members. He lived and passed away in Florida. Sympathy to the family.

FLOYD W. ANDERSON, Active 38 year member of the Pearl Road Group. Died in Texas of heart attack. Our condolence to the family.

MATTY OLDACH, 38 year member of the Superior-Grateful Groups. Our sympathy to the family.

BILL TRAMPUSH, Member of Strongsville Group, died suddenly of heart failure. Our condolence to the family.

GEO. RAKOTCI, Secretary of Garfield Tuesday. Our deepest sympathy to the family.

Customer: (with laryngitis) whispers: "What flavors of ice cream have you?"

Waitress, whispering: "Vanilla, cherry, and chocolate."

Customer: "Do you have laryngitis, too?"

Waitress: "No. Just vanilla, cherry and chocolate."

MILL ENDS AND REMNANTS

Ours is a program of sharing and since sharing has always been the philosophy of this column, we pass the following along, feeling you will be as receptive as we are:

YOU AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

I cannot say *Our*, if my religion has no room for others and their need.

I cannot say *Father*, if I do not demonstrate this relationship in my daily living.

I cannot say *who art in heaven*, if all my interests and pursuits are in earthly things.

I cannot say *hallowed be Thy name*, if I; who is called by His name, am not holy.

I cannot say *Thy kingdom come*, if I am unwilling to give up my own sovereignty and accept the righteous reign of God.

I cannot say *Thy will be done*, if I am unwilling or resentful of having it in my life.

I cannot say on *earth as it is in heaven* unless I am truly ready to give myself to His service here and now.

I cannot say *give us this day our daily bread* without expending honest effort for it or by ignoring the genuine needs of my fellowmen.

I cannot say *forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us*, if I continue to harbor a grudge against anyone.

I cannot say *lead us not into temptation*, if I deliberately choose to remain in a situation where I am likely to be tempted.

I cannot say *deliver us from evil*, if I am not prepared to fight in the spiritual realm with the weapon of prayer.

I cannot say *thine is the kingdom*, if I do not give the King the disciplined obedience of a loyal subject.

I cannot say *thine is the power*, if I fear what my neighbors and friends may say or do.

I cannot say *thine is the glory*, if I am seeking my own glory first.

I cannot say *forever*, if I am too anxious about each day's affairs.

I cannot say *Amen* unless I honestly say, "Cost what it may, this is my prayer."

-Author Unknown

The meeting is adjourned, by George!

Central Bulletin
Feb. 1968



THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS WITHIN

u s

God puts us on earth and tells us many times that the kingdom of heaven is with us. And he leaves us to discover and to develop that immensely important truth. At one time or another many of us do discover the truth but very few of us develop it. Yet the art of creating one's own heaven rests upon its development. And making the best of things discovering and developing the powers for good and beauty inherent in us-can you suggest a better way than that to attain the true meaning of happiness.

AA BLESSING

Blessed are you who asked for my help, for my greatest need is to be needed.

Blessed are you who understand that it is difficult for me to put my thoughts into words.

Blessed are you who with a smile encourage me to try once more.

Blessed are you who never remind me that today I asked the same question twice.

Blessed are you who respect me and love me as I am just as I am and not as you wish I were.

Patrick M.

FOR AA's

I always have the firm intention of doing something for my fellow AA and I do not permit my thinking to get all messed up with doubts and fears and deep in my heart I rejoice at the success won by others. AA friends I have found that Prayer is the fulfillment of a condition which makes greater blessing possible.

FOR LOVE FRIENDS AND GOD IN AA

I start off each day with my friends won by long effort friends whose loyalty once more had been tested and found not wanting-an abiding sense of gratitude fearlessness, peace of mind confidence in my ability to reflect in my conduct the attributes of God boundless faith in God and in his goodness and generosity to all who seek earnestly and endlessly to obey his laws and to walk with him.

TROUBLES

We should never attempt to bear more than one kind of trouble at once. There are some people who bear three kinds-all they have had, all they have now, and all they expect to have. Reliving troubles of the past concentrating the mind upon present troubles and fearing trouble in the future What a wonderful way to create your own private hell.

Patrick M.

FREEDOM

Freedom is a man at the lathe, or at the desk, doing the job he likes to do, and speaking up for himself. It is a man in the pulpit, or on the street corner speaking his convictions.

It is a man puttering in the garden in the evening, and swapping talk with his neighbors over the fence. It is the unafraid faces of men and women and children at the beach on Sunday or looking out of the car windows speeding along a four lane highway.

It is a man saying, "Howdy, stranger," without looking cautiously over his shoulder. It is the people of the country making up their own minds.

9 WAYS TO ACHIEVE PEACE OF MIND

(Some years ago, Duke University made an exhaustive survey to determine the principles of living by which most people achieve happiness. The principles given below were the result. Note how closely these "nine steps" resemble our AA philosophy.)

1. Shun suspicion and resentment. Nursing a grudge has been found to pull down happiness levels an average of fifty per cent.

2. Live in the present and the future. Most unhappiness stems from an unwholesome preoccupation with the mistakes and failures of the past. These are important only as your passport to a better and wiser today. Forgive yourself freely for past mistakes. It is vital to your happiness as forgiving others.

3. Don't waste time and energy fighting conditions you can't change. There is little you can do personally about stopping a war...healing the incurable disease of a loved one...or changing the nature and habits of those with whom you have to live. So stop hurling yourself against stone walls.

4. Co-operate with life-instead of trying to demolish it, or run away from it.

5. When you find yourself in the grip of emotional stress, force yourself to be out-going to other people, instead of retreating within yourself and building a prison of loneliness.

6. Refuse to pity yourself, or seek self-justification in easy alibis that make you appear "noble" to yourself and others.

7. Cultivate the old-fashioned virtues of love, honor, loyalty, thrift and church attendance.

8. Stop expecting too much of yourself. When there is too wide a gap between the standards and goals you have set for yourself-and your actual achievement-unhappiness is inevitable. If you can't improve your performance, aim for standards which are within your reach.

9. Find something bigger than yourself in which to believe. Self-centered materialistic people scored lowest in the Duke University tests for measuring happiness. While those who average high in altruism and religious attitudes generally come out with the top happiness ratings.

**"TRY SOMETHING NEW,
IT'S CALLED LISTENING,
LISTEN TO HEAR."**

ARE YOU PLANNING TO MOVE?

If so, clip this coupon and mail to 940 Rockefeller Bldg., 614 Superior Ave., N.W., Cleveland, Ohio 44113. Immediately. It is urgently needed before the next issue of the Central Bulletin.

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IT WILL HELP YOU AND IT WILL HELP US.



TWELVE STEPS TO BETTER DAILY RELATIONS

1. My first purpose in A.A. is my sobriety, and my first purpose toward A.A. is not to reflect any discredit on myself or my A.A. group.

2. My part in A.A. does not entitle me to any privilege that is not available to the whole membership.

3. Personal problems that I share and are shared with me are best kept confidential to reduce the possibilities of misunderstanding.

4. Visitors to our group are our guests and I must be mindful that good manners alone teach me not to impose on them.

5. When a speaker addresses our group, I personally am responsible for the simple courtesy of giving him my undivided attention.

6. I am responsible for keeping unfavorable opinions to myself in the interest of group unity.

7. Membership in A.A. does not entitle me to use this situation in the release of outside obligations. It is a matter of record, whereas my concern should be an attitude of humility for me to obtain real benefits.

8. I have many tools in A.A. to live by. At times, I am the only example of the A.A. attitude to demonstrate exactly how A.A. helps me.

9. I must keep an open mind and not participate in gossip and rumor.

10. My attitude toward fellow members should be a friendly one. If I cannot truly feel this, I should not impart any opposite feelings.

11. As an individual, I am responsible for the welfare of my A.A. group, being obliged not to do anything that cannot be reconciled with good conduct and behavior, and a credit to my group in gratitude for the privileges enjoyed.

12. If, at any time, I cannot enjoy a feeling of loyalty to my A.A. group, I should either resign or stay away until my attitude is reconcilable with A.A. teachings.

Tyler, Texas

NOT A DRY VOYAGE

Two Australians sailed a boat from Darwin to Singapore. Clem Jones, former Lord Mayor of Brisbane, and car salesman Lutz Frankenfeld of Darwin left port on September 3, 1977, and completed their 2498-mile journey 12 days later. Their vessel was constructed of 15,000 beer cans and measured about 23 feet in length. It was named CAN-TIKI.

ALCOHOLISM: TRUE ADDICTION OR JUST A RESPONSE TO STRESS?

by Steve Wilson
USA TODAY

COLUMBUS, Ohio—Many people who are labeled alcoholics are really not addicted to alcohol at all, but actually have developed a habitual response to stress and other factors, a new study shows. Control the stress, says the researcher, and you can control the **drinking** problem.

"We've lumped everybody who seems to have a drinking problem into one big category as an alcoholic," says Keith Kilty, professor of **social** work at Ohio State University. "If we treated cancer the same way, then everybody with cancer would probably die."

Kilty, a former alcoholism counselor, studied 197 people with drinking problems in Scranton, Pa., and found that abstinence is still the best medicine in the beginning for problem drinkers. But he admits that "a lot of people with drinking problems need to stop **drinking** forever."

But many drinkers find their problems are temporary, he says, and if they can come to grips with them, many can resume drinking without further difficulties.

A PROCESS, NOT A PROCEDURE

We have all heard the statement that the attainment of sobriety, as we define it, is a process, not a procedure. What is a process? What is a procedure? As I understand it, a **process** has flexibility and provides a framework within which complicated thoughts, feelings, and events can be evaluated prior to obtaining a solution. Procedures are inflexible and provide rigid recipe approaches to problem solving.

As each of us grows, our individual thoughts and feelings should be measured only against our wants and needs. If we were forced to march in locked step, then the journey to sobriety would be rigorous.

While seeking the advice and counsel of others, we need to be receptive to the unsolicited guidance of the more experienced. Additionally, remember that by design the program has no cookbook solutions. We need to live our program in communion with our Higher Power.

This is the process—we need to plow through each day making mistakes and judgment errors. The only way to learn the mechanics of sobriety is living and struggling through each problem.

To keep the sobriety process functionary, the desire to learn must be made paramount. As the desire to learn from ourselves and others weakens, processes become procedures, and procedures lead to complacency.

Chuck M.
New Reporter
Washington D.C.



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Harry D., Founder and Editor 1692-1966

VOL. 42 MAY 1984 NO. 8

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING

TUESDAY, JUNE 5, 1984—8:00 P.M.

OLD STONE CHURCH - PUBLIC SQUARE
CLEVELAND, OHIO

ALL GROUP REPRESENTATIVES WELCOME
BE INFORMED

FOUNDER'S DAY BREAKFAST
SUNDAY, JUNE 17, 1984—10:00 AM

SPEAKER: Dr. Paul O. Claremont, CA

Breakfast Group, P.O. Box 3209

Kent, Ohio 44240

Table of 6—39.00, Single 6.50

WESTERN PA. AREA
'WEEKEND OF SHARING'

JUNE 29, 30 AND JULY 1, 1984

SLIPPERY ROCK UNIV.

INFO: COMMITTEE, P.O. BOX 11296

PITTSBURGH, PA. 15238

PHONE: (412) 761-5368

28TH ANNUAL A.A.-OHIO STATE

GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE

JULY 20TH, 21ST AND 22ND, 1984

BOND COURT HOTEL-CLEVELAND, OHIO

REGISTRATIONS: OHIO GSC

P.O. BOX 14548-CLEVELAND, OHIO 44114

IN MEMORIAM

ED BRAATZ, A long time member of The Tobin Group.
Our sympathy to the family.

MY PRECIOUS FRIEND

Through the darkness of my day, we crossed paths. You walked with me until I could not stand and then you carried me and held my hand. This too shall pass you said to me, but I could not listen. The fog came back and I was unable to see, that you were only being a friend, and wanted nothing else of me. The sounds of silence frightened me and the words I could not bear, but never once did you stand and leave me and you even told me you would always be there. When are you going to leave me is what I want to know. Will it be tomorrow or in a day or so?

How can I find the shining words, the glowing phrase that tells all that your love has meant to me, all that friendship spells? There is no word, no phrase for you on whom I so depend. All I can say to you is this: God Bless You, my precious friend.

ALWAYS • CAREFUL • To • INVESTIGATE • OTHERS • NEEDS

DISTRICT OFFICE CORNER:

Our Editor, when asking if there would be a column this month got the straight-forward, direct answer that we were **thinking** about it • **threatened** to make that answer THE COLUMN.. so we had to do something about it!

We have some good news and some disappointments to share with you and we think the good news should come first. Our 1984 Fund Drive Campaign seems to, once again, have been successful but the real final figure cannot be given until all pledges are posted. This is being done just as fast as it possibly can be with the volume of the other things we have to do. Our 1984 Intergroup Dinner is but a memory **now...but** what a memory! We were privileged to have beautiful speakers, both Alanon and A.A. and a crowd to compliment their appearance. It was good to see renewed or first time interest in this annual event as we think it is always an evening to be enjoyed in fellowship with other members and their guests. This was the thirty-third year for the annual Dinner and the one bii affair that the Intergroup here sponsors. It is unfortunate that, on the day of the dinner, we had to tell some that no more tickets were available.. **which** leads **us** to...

The disappointments. We feel that mail coming to the groups from our District Office is placed on the back burner, never read (or often not even referred to) and as a result • members hear of the Raffle meeting some time after it was held. ..then we are told they hadn't heard it announced and had no time to prepare.

The next item is the lack of interest taken in our Committee Meetings. Out of approximately 566 groups and meetings in our area only twenty-two group representatives were present at our March election meetings for the Operating Committee.. **some** say they do not want to get involved in the "politics" of A.A. Please remember there are no **politics**, we are still one alcoholic helping another, and everything that is done is done for a reason. We have here a Fellowship that belongs to YOU; YOU support us, out of gratitude, to keep the doors open; YOU have every right to know what happens to the money you give to your District Office; YOU are the ones who complain about what we need and YOU are the ones we are working for. The Operating Committee is the committee that oversees the work of the District Office with YOU in mind, ever watchful that we are doing all in our power to keep you informed but YOU are not present!!!

For those who do not know- the Advisory Committee is YOU as a means of carrying back to your group what the Operating Committee reports at this meeting..we know YOU are there, we hear from YOU indirectly (usually not favorably as far as we are concerned) -please let us meet YOU at one of these meetings.

Like groups all over the country • we share a common problem other than our alcoholism. There has been and will continue to be an influx of new people being sent to us from courts, probation officers, employers who, in their way, are trying to help but are forcing us to often having to take extreme measures in handling those that are coming to us. A lot of these people actually have no drinking problem, some who have are denying that they do, some are willing to

"LET GO" DOESN'T MEAN STOP CARING

To "let go" does not mean to stop caring, it means I can't do it for someone else.

To 'let go' is not to cut myself off, it's the realization that I can't control another.

To 'let go' is not to enable, but to allow learning from natural consequences.

To "let go" is to admit powerlessness which means the outcome is not in my hands.

To "let go" is not to try to change or blame another, it is to make the most of myself.

To 'let go' is not to care for, but to care about.

To 'let go' is not to fix, but to be supportive. It is not to judge, but to **allow** another to be a human being.

To "let go" is not to be in the middle arranging all the outcomes, but to allow others to affect their destinies.

To 'let go' is not to be protective, it to permits another to face reality.

To "let go" is not to deny, but to accept. It is not to nag, scold or argue with, but instead to search out my own shortcomings and correct them.

To "let go" is not to criticize and regulate anybody, but to try and become what I dream I can be.

To "let go" is not to regret the past but to grow and live for the future.

To "let go" is to fear less and love more.

Unsigned
Fresno, Pipeline

LETITBEGINWITHME

BY DEFINITION — TO HELP!

I have only one purpose in this message. I simply want us to think more often, daily if possible, that the primary purpose of Alcoholics *Anonymous* is "to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety."

This is a spiritual program, as is our church. It belongs to God. We do not think less of our church because there are some members, sometimes even office-holders, who are not doing a first-rate job.

We cannot look down on the sober alcoholic because of his choice of words or actions when he is doing himself and another, who might just happen to understand such a person, a good service in staying sober.

I have never seen a sober alcoholic who did not grow and learn, as time went by, and even the worst choice of **expressions** changed to better. We need time and patience. God waits until our life is finished to pass His judgement. Who are we to be impatient? Our short little chance to do and to learn looks insignificant to Him who deals in eternities...

If we develop this patience, maybe we will acquire a bit of humility and be a bit surer of our sobriety, a Day at a Time.

Let's remember the common good of this wonderful Fellowship. Let's build it up, and not pick at it...

Let's be grateful.

Philomena R.
Wichita, KA.

HONESTY ABOUT LIMITATIONS BASIS OF PROGRAM

It is as important in A.A. to live within our limitations as it is to live up to our capabilities.

Our program is based on coping with our personal limitations. It is primarily concerned, not with the thing (the disease), but with the person (the alcoholic.)

We are made aware when we take Step One that we do not have a limit, but ARE limited. Step One is an admission and an acceptance that we had gigantic limitations as to our choice about drinking when we were guzzling.

The big action step, Number 12, reminds us to try to do things like practicing the principles of the program in all our affairs. The paragraph which follows a listing of the steps in Chapter 5 assures us that we claim spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection.

Our attitude of honesty about our limitations is the basis of our program. Since we came to A.A. to get sober, not somber, laughter plays a big role in our recounting of the wild things that happened due to our limitations when we tried controlled drinking.

Long-sober members have a way of reminding us that, by admitting limitations, we are counting ourselves as member of the human race. To be limited is to be human and to be human is to be limited. How often we hear, "Don't try to play God; people can never play God."

It is contact with others through caring and sharing love and service, that helps us discover our limitations, and to lean to live with them. We are reminded that all those who keep telling us, "We care," also have limitations. They teach us how to uncover, unload and recover from our limitations by taking the steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. They are our teachers because they have been through the limitations bit that may be troubling us.

Happily, the practice of finding, revealing and measuring our limitations leads to an understanding that we will never experience perfection, so we will never have to struggle to be the best in anything.

T.C.
North Hollywood

ARE YOU PLANNING TO MOVE?

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IT WILL HELP YOU AND IT WILL HELP US.



Published by
Cleveland Central Committee of A.A.

940 Rockefeller Bldg.
614 Superior Ave. N.W.
Cleveland, Ohio 44113

VOL. XLII-No. 9

CLOSED A.A. MEETINGS ARE FOR THE ALCOHOLIC

If we have heart trouble, we don't see a kidney specialist. Doctors don't treat a strep infection with the same medication as they treat a bacterial infection, although the symptoms and illness are similar.

Closed AA meetings are for the alcoholic; that is, people who are powerless over alcohol, people who have a drinking problem. Persons who are dually-addicted with both alcohol and drug related problems are welcomed into AA; but can't we, please, ask them to address their comments to the problem our program specializes in, i.e. alcoholism?

As an alcoholic, I cannot relate to such jargon as "using," "shooting-up," "sniffing coke," etc. I will never understand an individual who abuses his body by sticking a needle into it. I'm **apalled** by the very thought. I *can* relate to a person pouring alcohol into his body until he reaches total oblivion. Where are the sensuous pleasures of sniffing cocaine or taking a pill? There is no bite of the gin on the tongue, no buttersweet aroma that teases the nostrils and no hours of companionable togetherness with friends.

I did not drink to get drunk. I hated being drunk. I worked hard at trying not to get drunk while drinking. Drug addicts use drugs from the very start for the effect. That makes me different from them.

I spent most of my life feeling "different" than others. I'm convinced that that was one of the underlying emotional problems that contributed to my alcoholism. I felt shy, others were outgoing, so I drank. I felt inferior, others seemed superior, so I drank. I felt unattractive, others looked beautiful, so I drank. I felt sad, others were happy, so I drank. I felt nervous, others were calm, so I drank. I had no choice of drugs, no uppers or downers. I drank alcohol and took whatever emotion that came from the bottle.

John Barleycorn was a "social leveler" for me for a while, until it just plain leveled me. Then, I found AA. Here, I found people to whom I could relate, people who were like me. I was no longer different. I belonged.

I do not want to feel different again. But I do. I do when I sit in a meeting and hear drug-talk, not drunk-talk.

I hear people saying, "AA must change with the time. The problem of drug abuse is new; we must grow to encompass it." I would refer those people to an article written by Bill Wilson, co-founder of AA, written in 1958 called "...problems other than alcohol." In it he states **unequivocally**, "...there is no possible way to make nonalcoholics in AA members. We have to confine our membership to alcoholics, and we have to confine our AA groups to a *single* purpose. If we don't stick to these principals, we shall almost surely collapse. And if we collapse, we cannot help anyone."

I voiced my fears to a friend in AA who also happens to be

a GSR. Her advice was to speak out about my feelings at meetings or to leave those groups who do not stick to these principals. Well, fellow alcoholics, I am getting better, but I'm not yet one-hundred percent well. I would need a drink to stand up in a meeting and ask a drug addict to leave. I'd need a drink to interrupt a dually-addicted person and ask him to limit his comments to problems related to alcohol. I hope I don't end up needing a drink to get the courage to attend an AA meeting. And why should a recovering alcoholic, who is not drinking or disrupting a meeting, have to leave a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous?

Something must be done about this growing problem. If one, just one, alcoholic is harmed by this situation, then AA has failed in its purpose—"to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety."

Lea S.
Here's How

SELF-ESTEEM

When I first started to understand sobriety, I was excited about being able to live a life without all of the insanities that went along with my active addiction. For a while the excitement of it all kept me sober. But somewhere along the line the excitement had to be combined with work.

Taking care of my responsibilities can give me an inner satisfaction that I have found no where else. Thinking about taking care of them is exciting to me but just that wasn't good enough after awhile. When I started doing something about them. I started to feel a little more complete.

M.E.P., Cleveland

NAMTE' - GULLIBILITY

I was a very naive youth. I would believe anything anyone told me. I was a believer. I believed in the God of my faith; I believed in patriotism, and I believed in the American Dream. All I had to do was plan, study, work hard and I would get rich.

The devious deceived me. I became calloused. I believed in nothing but me. But I kept my dreams **fortifying** them with alcohol. I became a disillusioned alcoholic. I trusted no one, cared for no one but me. I retreated into my own world.

I am now five years sober in AA. I am no longer naive. I know & accept it is a tough world out there. I am now gullible. I know if a drunk uses me for money for food that he most likely will buy a drink. But he might buy a sandwich. I now have a God of my understanding. I understand sharing & caring and it is me who receives by giving without expecting return.

Ralph W.
Sister Ignatia Group



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Hany D., Founder and Editor 1892-1968

VOL. 42 JUNE 1984 NO.9

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING

TUESDAY, JULY 3RD, 1984—8:00 P.M.

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JULY 20TH, 21ST AND 22ND, 1984

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IN MEMORIAM

TOM TOBIN, Old Timer from Tobin Group, passed away May 19, 1984. Our condolence to the family.

ARNOLD BROWN, 12 year member of Language of the Heart Group. Our Sympathy to the family.

A BANK CALLED "TIME."

If you had a bank that credited your account each morning with \$86,400 that carried over no balance from day to day—allowed you to keep no cash in your account - and every evening cancelled whatever part of the amount you had failed to use during the day - what would you do? Draw out every cent of course, and use it to your advantage.

"Well, you have a bank - and its name is Time."

Every morning it credits you with 86,400 seconds. Every night it rules off as lost whatever of this you have failed to invest to good purpose.

It carries over no balance. It allows no overdraft. Each day, it opens a new account for you. Each night, it burns the records of the day. If you fail to use the day's deposits, the loss is yours.

There is no going back. There is no drawing against tomorrow.

It is up to each of us to invest this precious fund of hours, minutes, and seconds in order to get from it the utmost in happiness, sobriety and serenity.

Tyler, Texas

ANY EDITOR'S DILEMA.. .

Getting out a journal (or newsletter) is no picnic.
If we print jokes, people say we are silly.
If we don't, they say we are too serious.
If we clip things from other magazines,
We are too lazy to write them ourselves.
If we don't we are stuck on our own stuff.
If we make a change in another fellow's articles,
We are too critical.
If we don't, we are blamed for poor editing.
Now, like it or not, someone will say:
We swiped this from some other source.
We did.

from San Fernando Valley A.A. Newsletter

AA IS A SIMPLE PROGRAM FOR COMPLICATED PEOPLE

The alcoholic is probably the most complicated person in the world today.

He is usually an extremist-hard at work or sound asleep.

He is usually a worrier-remorseful about his past and afraid of his future.

He is usually an idealist-wanting to do big things and never seeming to accomplish them.

In his cups-he is an engineer, building a bridge-an architect, designing a building-an orator, swaying the people.. .

He can always do the job better than the boss.

He is a dreamer, unwilling to face reality,

But alcohol, crafty and cunning-eventually brings him to his knees—

Not knowing where to go-he turns to A.A. for help,

And what looks like a horrible defeat-turns into glorious victory.

Through A.A. members, he learns how complicated he is.

He learns he can live' without booze by simplifying his way of living.

He learns he can overcome the remorse of the past.

He learns he can do nothing about the future, until it arrives.

One day at a time-he can live an organized, simplified life-24 hours-no more-no less.

Through a simple program known as Alcoholics Anonymous.

from Sun Dry, El Paso, Texas

SINCERITY

Sincerity is the very foundation stone of true friendliness. It is also a human trait that is hard to counterfeit, as the sincere friendly impulse comes from the soul of a man and not from the calculating mind. Think kindly and friendly thoughts. If you have a heart and soul, why be ashamed of them? Bring them in to the shop and office and your daily life. The hand may be cunning, and the head may contain the brain that can conceive the most brilliant thoughts, but every good and worthy impulse comes from the heart. Strengthen them, believe that they are your friends and in the long run they will be.

WORRIER OR WARRIOR

Most people that do a lot of worrying seldom do anything about it. Perhaps it is because they derive some pleasure out of worrying. They just wouldn't be happy if they had nothing to fret about. Even when things are running smoothly, they take on some exaggerated reason to worry about. This might not matter too much if it did not affect others but such a dreary outlook can dilute the joys of those they come in contact with.

Most often the things that people worry about are not nearly as bad as they presume them to be, and these fears seldom become a reality. The fretting that is done is generally out of proportion to their importance and the time and effort is wasted which could be put to much better use.

Those that are afflicted with an overpowering fear of impending disaster or adversity are often found to be mentally exhausted. They contemplate with misgivings their future, their health or their job, or their slow progression when compared to others. Such worries overload positive trains of thought and impede their progress, continually keeping them in a valley of distress.

A grave danger exists by continually worrying as this can build up to a dangerous case of self-pity, which can lead to mental depression and eventually cause moral, mental and even physical harm. Worry can discolor proper thinking and can interfere in the relationship with others. Worry will only add to one's misery, subtract from one's pleasure, divide one's attention, and multiply one's troubles.

The worrier and complainer who does nothing to prevent or to alleviate this problem seems to get pleasure by sitting as a mourner at the coffin of fear from which he cannot extricate himself.

True, there certainly are times when there is justification for concern. When a loved one is seriously ill, or when someone loses a much needed job, concern is appropriate. But, unless the tendency for worry is controlled, it may get completely out of hand.

Worry is a crafty habit. Take as an example, the health worrier, who gets a slight cold. His next thought is

pneumonia. Or should he get a stomach pain, he quickly fears a major operation. He always seems to think that the best he can get out of life is the worst.

It is not always easy to blot out all our worries and neither is it easy for some to stay away from that first drink. Applying our Twelve Steps can prove helpful in both instances and also help in correcting our character defects, which in itself is a monumental task.

We are in this world for only a very, very short time and brooding and worrying will only cut that time short. It will prove to be more advantages if we devote our time and thoughts to things more positive, like helping and confiding in others, thus helping ourselves at the same time.

Life is just too short and precious to be wasted, worrying.
Ed B. Akron 0
(reprint)

BEING AVAILABLE

It is said now and then that we should not dwell in the past. Taken literally, I buy this one hundred percent. However, without morbidity, without self-recrimination, it is good for me to occasionally recall some of the events of my drinking days, and compare them to the AA way of life, which I have had for some twenty four hours.

Being available! I'm sure we have all heard these important words from time to time. But when we were drinking, who could depend on us for anything? Most of our lives, and actions, were unpredictable.

How many times did we come up short? In how many situations with ourselves, and with others, did we fail to accept our responsibilities? If there was a choice, and many times there was, between drinking and being available for someone, or for some important event, nine times out of ten we chose booze, inadvertently or otherwise.

Well, you say, this is true, but alcoholism is a disease. I really had no choice. Okay! We can accept that. But now things are different. We know about the disease, and all the symptoms. The Twelve suggested steps of the Alcoholics Anonymous program tell us what we can do to change things. For this, and all the benefits it has given me, I will be forever grateful.

When my son found the AA program, one of the reasons was because of my sobriety, and prayers. No preaching, just being available when needed. When my wife had a serious ulcer attack and almost expired, I was available, I called the paramedics who were instrumental in saving her life.

There have been a number of other crises in our lives which have been resolved due to my sobriety, and availability. Let's not forget those important times when you and I were called upon to try to carry the message to those still suffering. We were sober; we were available. We always benefited regardless of the results of our calls.

I thank God every day for the availability of my sponsor, my home group members, and all the wonderful AA's who are there when I need them. And I will always need them.

As a final note, let me say that these blessings I have received were not coincidences. I believe my Higher Power, God as I understand Him, has a destiny for me. A destiny which begins each day with prayer, and availability.

Tom P.
Here's How

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FROM THE BIG BOOK

STEP 6—Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

STEP 7—**Humbly** asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

‘We pocket our pride and go to it, illuminating every twist of character, every dark cranny of the past. Once we have taken this step, withholding nothing, we are delighted. We can look the world in the eye. We can be along at perfect peace and ease. Our fears fall from us. We begin to feel the nearness of our Creator. We may have **had certain** spiritual beliefs, but now we begin to have a spiritual experience. The feeling that the drink problem has disappeared will often come strongly. We feel we are on the Broad Highway, walking hand in hand with the Spirit of the Universe.

Returning home we find a place where we can be quiet for an hour, carefully reviewing what we have done. We thank God from the bottom of our heart that we know Him better. Taking this book down from our shelf we turn to the page which contains the twelve steps. Carefully reading the first five proposals we ask if we have omitted anything, for we are building an arch through which we shall walk a free man at last. Is our work solid so far? Are the stones properly in place? Have we skimmed on the cement put into the foundation? Have we tried to make mortar without sand.

If we can answer to our satisfaction, we then look at Step Six. We have emphasized willingness as being indispensable. Are we now ready to let God remove from us all the things which we have admitted are objectionable? Can He now take them all—every one? If we still cling to something we will not let go, we ask God to help us be willing.

When ready, we say something like this: ‘My Creator, I am now willing that you should have all of me, good and bad, I pray that you now remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows. Grant me strength, as I go out from here, to do your bidding. Amen.’ We have then completed Step Seven.”

From the Big Book, pg. 75 & 76.

CAN A JUG OF WINE BUY SOBRIETY?

I had reading problems as a kid - so many people told me I was stupid, I figured that was why I couldn't read. At age fourteen I ran away from home and I also started drinking. After 16 years of misery, I was a hopeless case and came to A.A. as a last resort.

Too proud to admit I couldn't read, I took the Big Book, went down to skid row, found a wino who wanted a drink. He said he could read, so I told him I'd buy him a jug if he'd read something for me. When he agreed, I brought him some wine and handed him the Big Book. When the jug was gone and his tongue got thick, I would let him go. A few days later, I'd buy another, go back, and he'd read some more.

I got through most of the Big Book like this. Now, after 24 years in A.A. without a sip, I have discovered that the Big Book and the "Twelve and Twelve" are available on tapes. I **bought them** for myself, and I'm enjoying them beyond description.

T.M. East Moline, Ill.
via The Hummer

KEEP COMING BACK

In a way I wish I could change one of **A.A.'s** phrases. The one I would like to change is "God as we understand him." It might be better if we change it to "God as we don't understand him."

Actually, I believe that the A.A. program and steps should stand as is. It is the most nearly perfect fellowship that I know of. I'm not really suggesting that we change anything in A.A.

But sometimes I hear comments from A.A. members that imply that we need to understand God before we take some of **A.A.'s** steps. In particular I heard one newcomer say that he needed to understand God better before he took Step 2.

There are two things I'd suggest in this vein. First, we finite human beings are really not capable of completely understanding God, are we? Second, if I waited until I understood God before I took a step, I wouldn't have taken any of them. It is through working the steps that I've come to understand God.

Sometimes it's better to make that "leap of faith." To take the steps before we understand God, to work the program before we feel ready for it. I have found that I can't think myself into right acting, but I can act myself into right thinking. If I take the steps first, I'll learn to understand God.

by Sally M.
Wichita, KA

Dear Fellow AA's

My name is Bill Z. and I have been a serious member of AA for over 18 months. Now that the fog is lifting I am getting back into creative writing. I've written several things about the program and I was just wondering if you could use the entry below for the Central Bulletin.

God gave me a gift and I need to share it.

We pray for all the drunks out there.

And yet they keep on dyin'

But Note at meetings - One new face

By God, we'll keep on tryin'!

May God Bless you and Thanks
Bill Z.

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IT WILL HELP YOU AND IT WILL HELP US.



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VOL. XLII-No. 10

HOW BILL W. FORESAW THE YEARS 1960-1985

A.A.'s first quarter-century is now history. Our next twenty-five years lie in prospect before us. How, then, can we make the most of this new grant of time?

Perhaps our very first realization should be that we can't stand still. Now that our basic principles seem established, now that our functioning is fairly effective and widespread, it would be temptingly easy to settle down as merely one more useful agency on the world scene. We could conclude that A.A. is fine, just the way it is.

Yet, how many of us, for example, would prefer to declare, "Well, I'm sober and I'm happy. What more can I want, or do? I'm fine the way I am." We know that the price of such self-satisfaction is an inevitable backslide, punctuated at some point by a very rude awakening. We have to grow or else deteriorate. For us, the "status quo" can only be for today, never for tomorrow. Change we must; we cannot stand still.

Just how, then, can A.A. go on changing for the better? Does this mean that we are to tinker with our basic principles? Should we try to amend our Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions? Here the answer would seem to me, "no." Those twenty-four principles have first liberated us, have then held us in unity, and have enabled us to function and to grow as A.A. members, and as a whole. Of course perfect truth is surely something better understood by God than by any of us. Nevertheless, we have to come to believe that A.A.'s recovery Steps and Traditions do represent the approximate truths which we need for our particular purpose. The more we practice them, the more we like them. So there is little doubt that A.A. principles continue to be advocated in the form they stand now.

So then, if our basics are so firmly fixed as all this, what is there left to change or to improve? The answer will immediately occur to us. While we need not alter our truths, we can surely improve their application to ourselves, to A.A. as a whole, and to our relation with the world around us. We can constantly step up "the practice of these principles in all our affairs."

As we now enter upon the next great phase of A.A.'s life, let us therefore rededicate ourselves to an ever greater responsibility for our general welfare. Let us continue to take our inventory as a fellowship, searching out flaws and confessing them freely. Let us devote ourselves to the repair of our faulty relations that may exist, whether within or without.

And above all, let us remember that great legion who still suffer from alcoholism and who are still without hope. Let us, at any cost or sacrifice, so improve our

communications with all these that they may find what we have found—a new life of freedom under God.

Bill W. 03/24/61
"The Last Days"
Denver A.A.

MEETING ROOM — CONCERN

The program of AA is very similar to the central nervous system of the human body. The brain (head) of this system controls the action, thinking, speech, etc. and it is very important to the body. What is sometimes overlooked, however, is the spinal column (backbone) which is responsible for carrying all the messages to this remarkable brain. If we place our finger against a hot stove, the backbone carries the sensory signals to the head so that our brain can tell the entire body you've been burned-go ahead and hurt. In AA, the organization is the body, the group is the head, but the individual has a great responsibility toward maintaining the head and body-being the backbone.

The backbone has another function. It is the support of the head and body. Take it away and the head droops and the body sags. In AA we are no different; we depend on the backbone and one of the areas in which we most need support is involvement and activity.

I sometimes wonder if each individual who feels "let someone else do it" has stopped to think—who is someone else? It is you. You are the one who comes to the meeting and has coffee and pastry. Who picks up your empty cup and brushes up your crumbs? Do you leave it for "someone else" to do? If each person cleared the meeting room of just his/her mess there would be little left for "someone else" to resent having to do.

How do meetings get put together? They aren't delivered pre-assembled via a delivery van, and they aren't an example of a miraculous birth. People who serve as backbone do it and we could use a few more vertebrae. Our twelve traditions tells us our "leaders are but trusted servants" but I, for one, am not the kind of servant that some of you expect to follow you with a broom and dustpan. If that is what it would take for me to stay sober, I would do it; but I want you to stay sober too, so why don't you do it for yourself. I realize the old habitats where you paid your money and got your drinks cleaned up after you, but look what else you got there too.

Without a backbone the head can no longer function and the entire body suffers.

Submitted by:
Ruby S
(Acceptance Group)



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Harry D., Founder and Editor 1692.1966

VOL. 42 JULY 1984 NO.10

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING

TUESDAY, AUGUST 7, 1984 — 8:00 P.M.

OLD STONE CHURCH • PUBLIC SQUARE
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ALL GROUP REPRESENTATIVES WELCOME
BE INFORMED

IN MEMORIAM

Our deepest sympathy to the families & friends of below deceased members of our fellowship.

JAMES CARDWELL • six year member,
Language of the heart.

JOHN O'MALLEY • forty-one year member.

JACK SEAMAN, • thirty year member.

JOHN SKUTT • Berea Friday Member

JOSEPH THIEL • Active Member.

THE HANDOUT

Received this letter last month from one of our readers who shall remain anonymous, which again shows what a helping hand can do.

Like many, he had lost all. He walked alone, up and down the lonely streets, the alleyways, the out of the way places, grubbing for what he could find or get which might reward him with the price of a drink or a bottle. Begging at rear and side doors for the needed sustenance to carry on. Unshaven, shoddy and seedy in appearance, he did at times touch the heart of a housewife for a bite of food and on occasion, luckily a meal.

A drunk he was but one with an elegance with words that could not be associated with his attire but which proved advantages in swaying the hearts of vulnerable listeners.

This was his mode of life now turned into years and though it could not be said that he was feeble, the strain of these years had become noticeable.

For some time, he had made regular and determined monthly visits to a small tailor shop in the area in hope of picking up a used or a discarded suit of clothes. In his earlier days, he had always considered himself a snappy dresser, one desirable quality he had not lost.

On a particular, routine visit, somewhat to his surprise, the elderly tailor told him with a distinct, foreign accent, that if he came back Tuesday afternoon at two o'clock sharp, and sober, he would have a suit altered to fit him. Expressing his thanks, J.C. used all his flowery, oratorical talent and promised to be on time and sober.

Fate has its many and unpredictable ways, for this was not to be the last time he and the tailor would meet. J.C. arrived as he had promised and he was sober and was shown the suit to be, but there was one stipulation attached. "The suit is yours," said the tailor, "if you will meet and talk to someone in the back room." A bit surprised, J.C. was caught unawares, but to lose his prize now was unthinkable, so, he agreed.

Entering the back room, J.C. found a man seated, who arose and smilingly blurted out, "I'm R.D. and I'm an alcoholic. I was a drunk but now I'm a member of Alcoholics Anonymous. J.C. did not seem the least startled as they shook hands. "I'm J.C.," as he introduced himself. "I was a top salesman seventeen years ago and a member of A.A. in Philly and you can see where I am now." It is told they talked of many things, important things in that back room of the small tailor shop and when they emerged, J.C. was wearing his newly acquired suit and a newly acquired smile. R.D. cheerfully said to the tailor, "He's going to wear it tonight to our meeting, see what cloths can do for a man?"

This time J.C. and without eloquence said, "It is not the suit R.D., this time it took a tailor and a friend."

Now, not a month goes by that J.C. does not drop in on his old friend, the tailor. At times for a fitting but always as a gesture of appreciation and gratitude which is most fitting.

J.C. also mentioned that the tailor's son had died recently of acute alcoholism.

GRATITUDE WITH HUMILITY

When I become so grateful for all that has happened in my life; also a time to remember that God has given the gift of forgiveness that I many times seem to forget.

During my many guilt trips it seemed I became too proud to make a stab at making amends or making restitution. I was too busy feeling sorry for myself, or telling myself it wasn't important. That lead me about as far from being humble as one could get. Then at times I became arrogant, which lead me in another direction far away from humility.

I guess in the beginning I didn't really know what humility meant. I then ran across a definition made by Bill W. which lead me to a clearer understanding.

He talks about "Guilt aims at self-destruction and Pride aims at destruction of others." He says, "This is why I see humility for today as that safe and secure stance midway between these two violent emotional extremes. It is a quiet place where I can keep enough perspective and enough balance to take my next small step up the clearly marked road that points toward external values."

With this in mind, I can seem to quiet my inner conflicts long enough to ask for forgiveness for deeds I have done which have not been as they should be. It seems I can now get a certain freedom from myself and my selfish thoughts and look back in a general way and become so very thankful for the program and Gods love and all the things that I have gained. I no longer have to wallow in these phony self-appraisals and tell people of my great accomplishments to over-shadow the defects of character that I couldn't own up to.

How thankful I am for the eleventh step. May I always use it in its entirety.

Ken G.

ALWAYS • CAREFUL • To • INVESTIGATE • OTHERS • NEEDS

FROM THE BIG BOOK — STEP 5

Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

“Having made our personal inventory, what shall we do about it? We have been trying to get a new attitude, a new relationship with our Creator, and to discover the obstacles in our path. We have admitted certain defects; we have ascertained in a rough way what the trouble is; we have put our finger on the weak items in our personal inventory. Now these are about to be cast out. This requires action on our part, which, when completed, will mean that we have admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being, the exact nature of our defects. This brings us to the Fifth Step in the program of recovery mentioned in the preceding chapter.

This is perhaps difficult-especially discussing our defects with another person. We think we have done well enough in admitting these things to ourselves. There is doubt about that. In actual practice, we usually find a solitary self-appraisal insufficient. Many of us thought it necessary to go much further. We will be more reconciled to discussing ourselves with another person when we see good reasons why we should do so. The best reason first: if we skip this vital step, we may not overcome drinking. Time after time newcomers have tried to keep to themselves certain facts about their lives. Trying to avoid this humbling experience, they have turned to easier methods. Almost invariably they got drunk. Having persevered with the rest of the program, they wondered why they fell. We think the reason is that they never completed their housecleaning. They took inventory all right, but hung on to some of the worst items in stock. They only thought they had lost their egoism and fear; they only thought they had humbled themselves. But they had not learned enough of humility, fearlessness and honesty, in the sense we find it necessary, until they told someone else all their life story.”

From the Big Book, pg. 72 & 73.



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ON MY WAY TO THE CEMETERY

On my way to the cemetery I stopped at A.A.

I was suffering from a spiritual thirst, so the remedy is the spiritual program of A.A.

The program is the vehicle with which I found my God again. He is the God that I pushed aside while I pursued the elusive pleasures. He loves me so very much that when I was ready to have Him again He gave me his Grace and allowed me to lift by self-imposed death sentence and join A.A. I did nothing whatsoever to deserve this Grace.

I did not realize the magnitude of this program the day I had my “Moment of Truth”; because I had come in for physical sobriety. I certainly was in for a surprise. I did not realize I was on the threshold of something that still staggers my imagination!

You people taught me many things-Here are a few: That my days have no ability to be good or bad-The degree of self-pity I permit myself makes the distinction.

I must love myself before I am able to love you. I always thought that love meant “making love”.

Be aware that I must be IN A.A. not ON!! That if I don't GROW I will GO. Be like green apples, because once ripe they fall off and rot. Have a purpose in life. Not like before when I was like a ship without a rudder, drifting aimlessly about.

I felt like someone who was wearing the wrong eyeglasses and thanks to you I now have the right lenses and can see and be aware of Gods gifts. I DO find myself living and thinking in a way that was totally foreign to me before.

You told me it would get better each day. You were right!! A.A. KEEPS ITS PROMISES.

I was getting older each day-now thanks to you I am getting younger each day. I know one thing for certain: As Socrates said long ago “I know one thing and that is, I don't know anything”. The longer I am in A.A. the less I know!!

Lou s.

Here's How

WISDOM FROM THE EAST

This phase of life I found elevating, the change turning eternally was still felt by me, but did not bother me now as it did at the beginning. I was getting accustomed to many changes. . . understanding the turmoil in me. My Master said, “Do not crave for the unattainable. It's enough you have realization.” All in good time.

We cannot understand God's intentions. All growth takes place in its own time. If you brood on your improvements rather than your shortcomings, you will be happier. And so you need not know what time of the day or what time of the week, or numbers, reckoning of before and after, when and how far; in short you don't have to know the business of counting, which habit has made us humans miserable in many ways.

We have lost the faculty of appreciating the present living moment. We are always looking forward or backward and waiting for one or sighing for the other, and lose the pleasure of awareness of the moment in which we actually exist.

R.K. Narayan, A Tiger for Malgudi
via The Road Back

A WINNER IS . . .

- Someone who loses, and comes back to fight again—*
- Someone who makes mistakes, and admits them, and apologizes sincerely—*
- Someone who accepts themselves, but without complacency—*
- Someone who accepts others' rights to be as they are, without criticism—*
- Someone who asks "How are you?" and really wants to know—*
- Someone who listens, and hears—*
- Someone who sees without blinders or rose colored glasses—*
- Someone who is Honest—*
- Someone who strives to be the best that they can be, and hopes it makes a difference that they lived at all, because we've all been given a second chance—*
- Someone who believes that success in A.A. and the credit for it belongs not to themselves but to a higher power—*
- Someone who can ask for help—*
- Someone who's not looking for an idol, but recognizes the good in each member, thereby being disappointed by none—*
- Someone who is brand new, and hurting, and keeps coming back—*
- Someone who works all of the 12 STEPS, and practices these principles in all their affairs—*
- Someone who is humble—*

RELIGION AND AA

AA is a spiritual program and not a religious program. With spirituality an AA prays and meditates to God as he/she understands Him. Religion is the worship of God such as kneeling in church with ceremonies and priests.

I at first had trouble separating my AA from my religion. It is a fine line separating a spiritual program from a religious program. Religions have rituals and houses of worship like churches and synagogues. AA does not have rituals and is not to be organized. We both teach sharing and caring love for each other but in AA we do not preach or lecture. We merely suggest.

It is a fine idea that you kneel down and thank your God each morning and night that you are sober but this is part of your religious program as kneeling is worship and worship is religion. But unfortunately there are no guarantees. It is I am free from alcohol today. One day at a time.

Ralph W.
Sister Ignatia Group

MY FIRST A.A. MEETING

It was January in Minnesota, and it was one of the worst snow-filled and coldest winters we ever had. From the warmth of the treatment center's lounge, I witnessed three ladies helping a fourth one-armed lady, named Lois H., out of a car into a wheel chair because she had a leg in a cast. It was quite a struggle as the wind blew snow in their eyes, and the wheel chair kept sliding out of control on the ice rutted sidewalk.

When they finally entered the lounge, their laughter and cheerful talk made me wonder what could be so great that they could be so happy after such a struggle in such miserable weather. They had come to conduct an A.A. meeting for us patients. Either, these ladies are nuts or there must be something great about an A.A. meeting.

At the meeting these persons took their turn talking up until then. I thought women talked and listened all at the same time. When the one-armed lady, who was the squad leader, asked us patients to say something, I had a difficult time keeping my mouth closed, so the others would not hear my teeth chatter from nervousness.

With encouragement I asked what I could do with my excess time after I was discharged and had to face the cruel life without alcohol. When someone told me not to worry, the man next to me, Bob B., came to my rescue, by stating that I had a legitimate question of the utmost importance to my future sobriety. He spoke so eloquently in my behalf that the 'outsiders' recognized my plea through the fellow patient, who in his own woundness helped me.

If it wasn't for that first meeting with those 'outsiders' and Bob B. caring for me I wouldn't be writing this.

You loving people added years to my life and life to my years. May God reward you.

Sticky, Life Line

HE HAD A LOT OF TIME

A man, taking a grandfather clock to be repaired, rounded a street corner and ran smack into another man, sending him sprawling.

"I'm so sorry, sir," said the first man.

The fellow on the ground got up, dusted himself off and snarled, "Why don't you wear a watch like everyone else?"

ARE YOU PLANNING TO MOVE?

If so, clip this coupon and mail to 940 Rockefeller Bldg., 614 Superior Ave., N.W., Cleveland, Ohio 44113. Immediately. It is urgently needed before the next issue of the Central Bulletin.

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IT WILL HELP YOU AND IT WILL HELP US.



Published by
Cleveland Central Committee of A.A.

940 Rockefeller Bldg.
614 Superior Ave. N.W.
Cleveland, Ohio 44113

VOL. XLII-No. 11

OURGOODNAME

If we do not protect our good name, the reputation of Alcoholics Anonymous, who will?

Some members of society, no matter how they might protest, still look upon the drinking alcoholic as a degenerate and the non-drinking alcoholic as a person to be watched. While recognizing that atmosphere exists, remember that the majority of society tries to support A.A. as a movement and A.A. members as individuals. How do we repay these expressions of love? And how do we turn the thoughts of those who watch us with a wary eye.

We act as respectable, considerate and responsible persons.

Society is not uninformed. They know what the "Easy Does it" bumper sticker cognotes. You are not unnoticed. People do not comment on your displays of A.A. membership because they respect your anonymity. If you drive your car in a reckless manner or give positive signals of disrespect such as parking in fire zones, with your A.A. membership boldly displayed, you clearly state what you think of society and its regulations. Unfortunately, society rightly or wrongly transfers its feelings about you and your actions to the program. Again you are not unnoticed.

Another issue is how do we respect the property of others? All of us attend meetings in church halls and basements. Rooms leased to us at nominal rates because we are engaged in positive activities. And what do we do. We leave behind trash littered floors, nicotine laden walls, desecrated sanctuaries, damaged rest rooms and a host of other annoyances and inconveniences.

The tragedy is the good name of A.A. is tarnished. Not your's or mine but the good name of the program and the good name of all those who blazed the trail from ignorance to understanding. Because of past efforts, A.A. has moved from the shadows of distrust into the light of respectability. Ask an "Oldtimer" about A.A. not being accepted by churches.

But the pendulum is beginning to swing back. Church representatives are asking A.A. meetings to seek other locations. Restaurants no longer desire our after meeting business. Other churches are tired of cleaning up after us and are debating drastic actions. The unthinking few are damaging the whole.

Everyone of us needs to begin a campaign of respect for the people inside and outside of the fellowship. We need to emphasize that we are the guests. We need to reinforce the responsibility theme that we must leave each place better than we found it. We need to remember that the program is judged by our individual and collective actions.

If our reputation as contributors to society is embarrassing no one will seek out or point out the extended hand of A.A. For they will have questioned "how can they clean up their act, when they can't clean up?"

Sincerely,
Chuck M.
New Reporter
Washington D.C.

July 14, 1984

"Dear Amigos:

In February of this year I wrote to all of you through the Central Bulletin explaining why Helen, my wife, and I had found it impossible to say goodbye to each one of you personally. We still feel sorry we missed that opportunity.

"We arrived in Laguna Beach, California on Thursday, February 2nd and the following day we were attending their Friday noon A.A. meeting. But before we went to the meeting we spent some time watching the swimmers at the beach downtown!

The weather here is really heavenly, however, we think it would be nice to see rain sometime."

"I and my wife Helen wish the best of health to each and everyone of you. A million thanks for some of the letters we have received and some phone calls."

Your amigo,
Dick P.

THE AA "LEAD"

In AA we do not tell people what to do, what not to do, what to say, what not to say and particularly who to talk to and who to boycott. THIS IS IN VIOLATION TO THE AA CREED WHICH SAYS AA IS NOT A SECT.

Unfortunately some AA's do not listen when our Program is presented at a meeting. They do not read. So they make up their own AA to suit their needs and feelings.

The Big Book says AA is a type of therapy. It is not an edited type of speechmaking to please some AA's who cannot "relate." You don't have to MURDER someone to understand a situation, to relate.

The "LEAD" is a phenomenon that developed in the Cleveland area. It started with a man telling his story around a table. Now it is out of hand. We should go back to the table-much of this STAR POWER \$\$ business would be eliminated. Detroit AA has (200⁺ individual meetings) but they have 20 tables with 20 "leads".

The Old Timers are losing respect. They are now in a minority, and should act like elder statemen. If they want respect.

Ralph W.
Euclid Wed.



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Harry D., Founder and Editor 1892-1966

VOL. 42 AUGUST 1984 NO. 11

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 1984 — 8:00 P.M.
OLD STONE CHURCH - PUBLIC SQUARE
CLEVELAND, OHIO
ALL GROUP REPRESENTATIVES WELCOME
BE INFORMED

THIRD LEGACY MEETING
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 1984 — 2:00 P.M.
ST. JOSEPH'S CHURCH
STATE RTE. 44 & PIONEER TRAIL
ONE MILE SOUTH OF 82
MANTUA, OHIO

IN MEMORIAM

Our deepest sympathy to the families & friends of below deceased members of our fellowship.

CLIFF ALBERS, former treasurer of Brook Park Group
JOHN FOLATKO, secretary of the Parmatown Men's Group.

ANDY GOUCH, member of Orchard Grove Group.
FATHER HORST, Wednesday Men's Discussion.

**RECOVERING PHARMACISTS PLEASE CALL IM-
 OGENE 241-7387**



"AA says, 'Stick with the winners.' I'm going to ask Al-Anon if I have to stick with a loser."

DISTRICT OFFICE CORNER

August already! The summer days are melting away and, some of the days, we along with them...when it's hot here, it is really hot.

Cleveland hosted the Ohio State General Service Conference this year. It was held the July 20th weekend • it was great • everything went really well. Speakers were excellent, the panels and most of all, the fellowship.

The reason we mention the Conference is because it brought something to mind. The May issue of the Bulletin contained an article taken from U.S.A. today which dealt with the thinking and findings of some outside agency and the far-out reasoning they do have regarding alcoholics and alcoholism. The article was put in just for thought but somehow our office received many complaints that such an item would be included in our Bulletin! Anyone attending the conference that made it upstairs to the Archives room would have seen how blatantly A.A. was put down and written about in newspapers and magazine articles, especially in the year 1964—we were called everything • but we survived. They have a special heading: "A.A. Criticism" so if you were unable to visit that room • the next Founder's Day or State General Service Conference you attend • be sure to look it up. Criticism such as this and various studies by some very big Universities and Research Companies are always and will always be showing up because they still can't understand us!

Your office has been very busy this summer • when vacation time comes for each of us • we really are earning the time off. Pledge reminders were sent out and response to them was very gratifying. We think we should mention here that we do not bill anyone on a monthly basis for their pledges. Reminders are sent out three times a year • the next ones will be September and December. If you have not paid your pledge and are ready to pay • you need not wait for a reminder as we have payments sifting in all the time. We are very happy that our goal for the year was exceeded, thanks to the generosity of our members but we never receive 100% of the amount pledged because we cannot foresee the future • some members do not stay with us, others suffer from unemployment and, sadly, other members pass away so we never expected the stated pledge amount...we do run over 75% which is excellent.

We don't get to visit you every month because the deadline for publishing comes around pretty fast. When you do hear from us, it is something we squeeze in at the last minute and we've heard • "If it weren't for the last minute, a lot of things wouldn't get done". **THINK ABOUT IT!**

YOUR TRUSTED SERVANTS

A drunk was hunched over the bar, toothpick in hand, spearing futilely at the olive in his drink. A dozen times the olive eluded him. Finally, another patron, who had been watching intently from the next stool, became exasperated and grabbed the toothpick. "Here, this is how you do it," he said, as he easily skewered the olive.

"Big deal," muttered the drunk. "I had him so tired out, he couldn't get away."

ALWAYS • CAREFUL • TO • INVESTIGATE • OTHERS • NEEDS

LAUGHTER IS OUR BEST MEDICINE

ANOTHER LUSH was playing the slot machines in a Las Vegas saloon. After feeding dollar upon dollar into the one-armed bandits without winning, he asked the bartender, "Don't these damned machines pay anything?"

"Sure", replied the barkeep. "They pay the rent, the waitress, the electric bill - sure, they pay real good, sir."

SO HELP US, the following is really true. We have a ham radio operator in our group, and he said he finally realized it was time to do something about his drinking problem when he continually found himself tapping remorse code on the bar.

A WSH WHO WAS PANHANDLING ON Wall Street tried to put the touch to a broker who worked there. "Is this the only way you can make a living?" asked the financier.

"No," said the bum. "Actually, I once wrote a book called 100 Ways To Make Money"

"Then why are you begging on the street?" asked the broker.

"Well," said the dipso, "this was one of the ways."

A CANDIDATE FOR MAYOR in a small town called on the local minister to solicit his vote. "Before I decide," said the clergyman, "I'd like to ask you something. Do you drink intoxicating beverages?"

"Before I answer," replied the candidate, "I'd like to clear up something. Is that an inquiry or an invitation?"

WE LEAVE YOU NOW with this thought: Quit feeling sorry for yourself. What if all the errors you made were published in the newspaper every day, like a baseball player's?

About the new kind of wine called Post Office Red? You mail five pounds of grapes in a container and mark it FRAGILE

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FEAR

When we are afraid to face up to and recognize our own shortcomings and are afraid of what we might see in ourselves, then it is time to turn back again and renew the taking of that 4th Step. For continued and comfortable sobriety it is necessary that we once again become enlightened as to our own true identity. It is absolutely necessary that we again become aware of who and what we are and find the image of who and what we would like to be. It is not necessary that everyone continually shower us with praise and adulation, though it is good to be well thought of and respected. The main force of our self-recognition is in what we think of ourselves. Our self esteem and feelings of self worth are what put us on the track to self respect. Then and only then can we expect the respect of others. When we clean ourselves up of body, of language, of thoughts and of treatment of others then we can shed ourselves of our stinkin thinkin'. However it is altogether too often that we want to close our eyes to our fallibilities and shortcomings because we are afraid that our ego is going to be fractured and that our phony pride does not want to admit that we are wrong.

After retaking our 4th Step what gets better? Certainly it is not circumstances or things. After again seeking the light it is WE who get better and are thus better equipped to cope with circumstances or things. When we start being guided once again by a good conscience that has come alive within us then we have no need to be afraid of the light.

Jim H.L.
Silver Dollar

ONTHEBEAM

After quite a few 24 hours of sober living, I must still constantly be on guard because it is easy to forget how cunning our malady is. Remember, we never do have it made in this program, and I am glad it is this way because as a result, I can look forward to a lifetime of growth-if I continue to work the program. It is when I stop working the program that I need to quickly recognize these danger signals.

In my case it starts to happen when I become complacent, start to miss meetings, and become unwilling to practice absolute honesty. It's not long before I start to become a little "cocky" and that can easily lead me to believe that I've got it made.

Another real danger for me is when I become bored at a meeting or with my program, and start to believe that I've heard all this before-or that I don't need this. Then I had better listen very closely and get back to my inventory.

With an attitude like this I cannot possibly carry any message to others because I will quickly lose my compassion for them. I will start building resentments and will certainly be in no mood to make amends or admit I am wrong. When all these things start to happen along with others, I find that my Spiritual part of the program is sadly lacking, and I had better get busy and ask for help from my Higher Power, and examine and admit to all these defects in my trying to live the program.

Ken G.
Silver Dollar

OUT OF THE FOG

The warmth of a bright, sunny, fun-filled day is being drawn below the horizon by the upcoming darkness. Enticed to arise from its bed in the cool dampness of the swamp, the fog moves slowly, but with definite purpose. It will creep toward the surrounding land, and as it becomes more fully awake it will become denser and move more rapidly. When it has built sufficiently to take possession of the land by dropping as an impenetrable blanket, it will have reached its goal. Here it will remain, to enjoy whatever havoc may be caused, until the sun again comes up to brighten a new day. In the manner of fog, alcohol descends on man.

Man will have his sunny day. There will be friends, laughter and nothing to make him apprehensive about evening's approach. There will be no indication that this day cannot last forever, and he will try to make each moment count. Even when the sun begins its descent, man continues the merriment. He has not seen the fog, and therefore, can see no cause for alarm. The sun sinks lower and lower.

When he first becomes aware of the awakening fog, he is not concerned because he feels he is in control. After all, man is master of the universe and should have nothing to fear. He has no concept of the power of the fog, once awakened, until finally there is no turning back. There is no choice given; he must proceed along the course which leads directly to the heart of the grandfather of all fogs.

Man is engulfed in a cloud heavy enough to obliterate his senses and impair his reasoning. He has eyes that cannot see and ears that will not hear. He does not know which way to turn. His mind refuses to function and he has truly lost his way. He will stumble along an unfamiliar path and be totally unaware of the obstacles he will encounter, or the hazards that await him. He will be only vaguely aware of his family who must have slipped into the darkness with him, and has been left to feel their way along, though he knows not what. How can he help them when he cannot help himself?

He detects a glimmer in the distance. Is the sun actually beginning to eat its way through the vapor? He moves forward hopefully and he can now see that the sun has been released by the horizon, like a balloon to float toward the sky giving off its light as it ascends. As the light grows brighter the fog begins its retreat, back to the swamp where it will lie dormant until it is once more aroused.

Man looks around and finds his family, which had been lost only to him. He finds some of himself that had been unknown to him, but he is pleased. He finds something that he had lost long before the fog-his self-respect. This new man can now gather his family and together they can walk into the sunshine of a bright new day. Alcohol no longer clouds his brain. He has come out of the fog.

Ruby
(Acceptance Group)

HOW I BEAT ALKY THE CHAMP

By Bert J.

I've been fightin' Alcohol for God knows how long;
And every bout I had everything went wrong.
Alky's the Champ and he keeps beatin' us chumps.
Boy! Did I fight him hard, but I sure took my
lumps.

Alky punishes the body, and he's a dirty fighter too.
He hits the liver and kidneys and won't heed a boo.
But I'm still game 'cause I always come back for
more,
Until I take a big "hit" and fall flat on the floor.

I'm dizzy and groggy but I'll beat the count.
When back on my feet — a counter attack I'll
mount.

I'll bob and I'll weave: I'll grab and I'll hold,
Until my head clears then again I'll get bold.

But too many "hooks" I take hard in my lips,
Causes me to stagger and fall back on my hips.
Alky's cold and cruel; he's a killer in the ring.
He K.O'd me and ran up his victory string.

But I'm game as they come and I'll seek a rematch.
Got a plan in my mind that I'm gonna hatch.
My new manager is great! — goes by the name of
AA.

He'll help me to put Champion Alky away.
AA's train' me good — put me on the right track.
He told me to stay away from Alky and counter
attack.

My new manager said, "Just spar and duck."
Now Alky can't hit me 'cause I'm no longer a cluck.

I got Champ Alky hangin' on the ropes.
I'm beatin' him good and raisin' my hopes.
He can't hit me now 'cause he's out of his class.
AA's strategy is workin' — my jaws no longer made
of glass.

If I continue to fight Alky one round at a time,
I may not K.O. him but the decision will be mine.
When the fight is ail over at the end of the day,
I can raise my hand in victory and thank old AA.

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VOL. XLII-No. 12

UNITY— TRADITION ONE

"Our common welfare should come first: personal recovery depends on A.A. unity." This Tradition emphasizes two fundamental truths to me.

The first is that because my A.A. Group is the basic unit through which Recovery is made available to me, the collective welfare of the Group is of prior importance to the welfare of any individual. I need A.A. more than A.A. needs me.

The second is that in the absence of other recovering alcoholics my recovery will fail. "We stay whole or A.A. dies." It is because I am totally dependent on the collective experience, strength and hope of my Group that its welfare must be recognized by me as taking precedence over my personal welfare if these should be in conflict. If the difference between my Group and me is one of Conscience, then for the sake of both me and the Group I should seek another Group in the conscience of which I shall not be exposed to conflict. This recognition of the relative importance of the Group and of me as a member of it is my first practical lesson in Humility, and having learned it I am in possession of an enlightened self-interest which will be conducive to my recovery, while at the same time enabling me to put first things first - in this case, the welfare of the Group before my own.

Applying this principle to the situation (usually participation in service committees) in which several Groups seek methods to accomplish tasks which are beyond the resources or capacity of any one Group to perform, the Tradition means, in my understanding of it, that each Group should participate in the discussion and subsequent action, with the other Groups, observing the same attitude as to the relative importance or "rightness" of its view if that differs from the consensus. The benefits of the Tradition, if observed, will be to enable the Group to give maximum care to each of its members and to enable Groups to work together on common tasks in harmony with one another.

Unity at Group level is the sole guarantee of Recovery to me as an alcoholic.

Unity among Groups in common endeavors protects the integrity of each Group and frees it to work effectively with other Groups.

Tom L.
from the Road Back
Dublin, Ireland

SOBRIETY - A TIME FOR LEARNING

"When the pupil is ready, the teacher appears." Life's lessons often come unexpectedly. They come, nevertheless, and they come according to a time frame that is set by our Higher Power. As we grow emotionally and spiritually, we are readied for further lessons for which teachers will appear.

Perhaps the teacher will be a tragic experience, a loving relationship, or a difficult loss. The time of learning is seldom free from pain and questioning. But from these experiences and what they can teach us, we are ready to learn. As we are ready, they come.

For life has much to teach us; just as we have much to learn. We need to learn tolerance; for we are being taught that it is more important to understand than to be understood. We need to learn self-respect; for only when we have learned to love ourselves better, can we love others best.

We are learning that there is a right time for all growth. A right time for all experiences. And the right time may not fit our timetable. What does not come our way today, will come when the time is right. Each day we are granted just what is needed. We need not worry about the future. It will offer us whatever rightly comes next, but it cannot do so until we have experienced those 24 hours before us. (Reference: "Each Day a New Beginning.")

GIVING IT AWAY

Everyday I try to be kind to at least one person without expecting anything in return. There are various ways of being helpful and kind.

One way of showing kindness is to talk with a new person. I try to help them feel comfortable. I listen to them and tell them I too had the same feelings and experiences.

Another way to be kind is by doing small favors. I will gladly give someone a ride to a meeting, no matter how far he lives. I also offer rides to people.

Then I try to help people when they are down-and-out. I give up my time to be with someone when they need me, and to listen to their problems. If someone is hungry, I'll feed them. If someone needs a place to sleep, I'll bring them home with me.

I am not a saint nor wish to be one. I am trying to become a better person. I am making progress and I have not achieved perfection. I hope to continue to grow and learn One Day at a Time. Today I do what I can and be the best I can possibly be.

Audrey F.
Back To Basics

CENTRAL BULLETIN



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Harry D., Founder and Editor 1692-1966

V O L . 4 2 SEPTEMBER 1984 NO. 12

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 2 1984, 8:00 P.M.
OLD STONE CHURCH - PUBLIC SQUARE
CLEVELAND, OHIO
ALL GROUP REPRESENTATIVES WELCOME
BE INFORMED

THIRD LEGACY MEETING

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 1984-2:00 P.M.
ELECTION
ST. JOSEPH'S CHURCH
STATE RTE. 44 & PIONEER TRAIL
ONE MILE SOUTH OF 82
MANTUA, OHIO

IN MEMORIAM

Our deepest sympathy to the families & friends of
both deceased members of our fellowship.

- STEPHEN GRATSON-15 year member of Parmatown Men's Group.
GEORGE COATES-9 year member of Parma Hts., Group.
PETE JANKOWSKI-member of Valley View & Brookside Groups.

PARDON MY BLOOPER*

(errors in reading Chapter five, etc. or speaking at meetings)

- 1. Step One . . . "We admitted we were powerless over alcohol, that our "wives" had become unmanageable."
2. "Rarely have we seen a person who has followed our path."
3. "That" good God "would if He were bought".
4. Step Eleven — "Sought through prayer and "medication" . . ."
5. "Made clear three 'pregnant' ideas. . ."
6. "Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help others to achieve Alcoholism."
7. "The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop smoking."
8. "The only 'desire' for membership is to stop drinking."
9. "Tradition Four: "Each group should be 'automatic' except in matters . . ."
10. "Tradition Six: "An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the A.A. name to any related 'Family' or outside"

Reprinted from "THE HUMMER" Calistoga, Ca.

LET GO & LET GOD*

To "Let go" does not mean to stop caring, it means I can't do it for someone else. To "let go" is not to cut myself off, it's the realization that I can't control another. To "let go" is not to enable, but to allow learning from natural consequences. To "let go" is to admit powerlessness, which means the outcome is not in my hands. To "let go" is not to try to change or blame another, it's to make the most of myself. To "let go" is not to care for, but to care about. To "let go" is not to fix but to be supportive. It is not to judge, but to allow another to be a human being. To "let go" is not to be in the middle, arranging all the outcomes, but to allow others to affect their destinies. To "let go" is not to be protective, it's to permit another to face reality. To "let go" is not to deny, but to accept. It is not to nag, scold or argue with, but instead to search out my own shortcomings and correct them. To "let go" is not to criticize and regulate anybody, but to try and become what I dream I can be. To "let go" is not to regret the past, but to grow and live for the future. To "let go" is to fear less and love more.

I heard a story recently - it was fiction I presume - of a man who had fallen off the edge of a high cliff. He managed to grab onto the root of a tree growing out of the side of the cliff, and was literally hanging on for dear life.

He began to pray. Then he heard the voice of God asking him: "Do you really believe in Me." "I do, I do!" protested the poor man, whose life hung in the balance. "Do you trust Me?" asked the voice of God. "Yes, yes!" the man answered. Then the voice of God came back, "Then I will see to it that you are saved. Now do what I tell you to do.

"NOW LET GO!"
J.P. British Fashion

FAITH . . .

Faith is a gift of God. It is not a material that can be seen, heard, smelled, tasted, or touched; but is as real as anything that can be perceived with these senses. One can be aware of Faith as easily as one can be aware of earth. Faith is as certain as the existence of water. Faith is as sure as the taste of an apple, the fragrance of a rose, the sound of thunder, the sight of the sun, the feel of a loving touch. Hope is a wish, but with the expectation of getting it. Faith adds surety to the expectation of hope.

SERVICE FOR SOLID SOBRIETY

With only a half-year of sobriety and three months of actual AA experience, I may be talking too soon, perhaps not. But I would like to say something on service in AA.

I have managed very easily, and very quickly I might add, to acquire many opportunities to do service work. It is difficult to tell you exactly what service work is doing for me, but I'll try.

Mostly, 'it is helping me to stop feeling sorry for myself, which has always been my biggest and maybe only real problem. But, so far, "getting lost in AA" is more of a journey back home — back to a place where I am loved, accepted even appreciated, without a lot of hoopla or special treatment. And mostly, it is helping me to be able to love — love like I've never known. A love without strings; a love that gives and gives. Service seems to be the key, for the more I give, truly the more I get.

So if you've been in AA for any amount of time, and if you find you still feel empty, and if all the promises of AA are not being filled, try being of service. Pour out all your stored goodness and your cup will truly runneth over with something priceless that doesn't come in print.

Excuse me, someone needs me.

Mike M.
Andrews Group
WAIA Reporter

SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Do we fully realize that without the spiritual part of our AA program there would be no AA? We must have a personality change and the only way we can gain this is in the form of a spiritual awakening we receive from living the AA program.

Without the above mentioned quotes from the "Big Book of AA" we would be nothing but a bunch of disgruntled people temporarily on the wagon, living in a state of mental drunkenness.

Now let's ask ourselves a couple of questions as outlined in the "Little Red Book." Are we really spiritually awakened or is it change, fear, self-will or alcoholic rationalization that keeps us sober? What fills us with the desire to carry the message to other alcoholics? Who grants us the power to stop drinking? Is it possible that an alcoholic can arrest the physical allergy and the mental obsession by his own power? **The "Big Book" says "No."** The medical profession agrees and the alcoholics who try to disprove this end up drunk.

Sometimes I feel we must retreat to a few simple questions in AA and that at times we may slide into a maze of complications not necessary to stay sober and forget that we should forever keep it simple.

When we forget this, I think we find ourselves in trouble. Let's not forget the basic principles of AA and these basic principles for the most part are spiritual.

Those who accept and try to live all of the Twelve Steps seldom fail. Those who skip the spiritual principles seldom succeed.

Ken G. Silver Dollar

HONESTY

Freedom from self-deception; trustworthiness in thought and action; sincerity in our desire to recover from alcoholism; willingness to admit a wrong; fairness in all our dealings with others; refusal to steak that first drink.

Be a Bulletin Booster

AROUND THE CORNER

Many times have I heard at this time of the year, spring is just around the corner, but what is with it other than birds and sunshine? What they bring with them is what we must learn to handle-the winds, the rain, tornadoes, and many others and, of course, our good friends, the mosquitoes.

How simple you may say. True, no doubt. So is sobriety. Don't take that first drink.

My most common question from a beginning AA member is, 'Why do you, after so many years of sobriety, go to AA meetings?' I told him or her "to improve my relationship with other people and to clean the garbage from my mind."

If you think spring comes with the first robin and sobriety comes when you don't drink, then you are off base and you will be tagged out.

I'm cleaning out the basement. Now what would happen if I didn't do that a couple times a year? No doubt a broken limb.

I go to AA to protect myself at that corner where we who are sober never know when our enemies, anger, jealousy, envy and so on, may jump out and beat us up with alcohol.

I have been sober for X number of years and I know what they look like and I use the weapon which they can't endure-that's prayer.

Yes, you are sober now and God Bless You. Keep an eye on those corners.

Leo R.
Silver Dollar

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SPIRITUAL STEP?

Often in A.A. meetings there will be mention made of the "spiritual side of A.A." or "the spiritual steps." Of course the entire Alcoholics Anonymous program for recovery from alcoholism is spiritual. The only physical act involved in arresting the disease of alcoholism via A.A. is staying away from the first drink. All of the twelve steps require the alcoholic to think, to meditate, to pray, to trust, to love-none require physical labor of any sort. Even in doing twelfth step work we are required to love and trust both the Higher Power and our fellow alcoholics more than we are required to labor. Why must some of us complicate our simple A.A. suggested steps to recovery?

I believe that Step One is the most spiritual step of all the twelve steps. Step One did more to improve my conscious contact with God than did any other step. For the first time in my life I admitted that I was a weak and helpless human being; that indeed I was not the little god that I thought I was; that I was not in control of even myself. This was an opening of me which allowed a Power greater than myself to enter and restore me to sanity. Step One was the beginning of my conscious contact with God and yet, before I took Step One, God was leading me to the A.A. life-saving program. I have often had occasion to be grateful that people were taking their twelfth step and thus could carry the message to me-but God, as I understand Him, had first led those people to A.A.-and people before them right back to Bill W.

In Step Eleven we "pray only for knowledge of His will and the power to carry out His will. And, once again, we are led back to people. For we can only truly know God and do His will by knowing and loving people. The suggested steps to recover, from Step Three through Step Twelve are all people steps, but God as we understand Him is in every one of them. Step Eleven is the culmination of all the preceding steps. Now we turn to God for the strength and power to love and help our fellow man and thus we are brought face to face with our Twelfth Step.

I believe that when we say "A.A. is a spiritual program" it is just that-and that there is no part of it that is not spiritual. And I believe that the person closest to the Higher Power in any A.A. meeting is the newest person there-the guy or gal who only that very day, or a few days before has been on his or her knees begging God for help.

Step One is truly the step that "opens the gate of hell and lets us out". From the time that we take Step One—"We admitted that we were powerless over alcohol-that our lives had become unmanageable"—one through the other remaining suggested steps, as on through life, as long as we do not have that first drink-we are bound to grow spiritually. There is no other way

Without our First Step no other step is possible and we do not live, let alone grow. Having taken Step One and continuing to stay away from that first drink, not

only do we live but there are no bounds to our spiritual growth. All is possible and there are no limitations—we can be and do more than we ever dreamed of.

Mary B.
Park Forest A.A.
Here's How

GETHONEST

My drinking habit forced me to be dishonest with myself and to others I had to lie and tell half truths to my boss as to my work and its accomplishments. I took credit in reports that others had done. I sold cases of samples to buy booze.

I am now sober five years. I don't do felony stealing or heavy lies anymore. I realize now I was going around in circles. I was stealing to drink and I was drinking because I was stealing. Now I got to get honest. Stop the exaggerations. The Big Shot stuff. Accept myself as I am.

Dump the fantasies of grandeur. Accept the things I cannot change.

Ralph W.
Sister Ignatia

YES, THE 12 STEPS ARE BASED UPON ACTION:

- | | |
|-------------|---------------|
| 1. ADMITTED | 7. ASKED |
| 2. BELIEVE | 8. BECAME |
| 3. TURN | 9. MADE |
| 4. MADE | 10. CONTINUED |
| 5. ADMITTED | 11. SOUGHT |
| 6. REMOVE | 12. TRIED |

WINNERS DEVELOPED The Habit Of **Doing** The Things That **Losers** Don't Like To Do.

From: Art B.

BAD INFORMATION IS KILLING MORE OF US THAN ALCOHOL IS.

From: Joe L.

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IT WILL HELP YOU AND IT WILL HELP US.



HOW IT WORKS-THE ORIGINAL VERSION

Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our directions. Those who do not recover are people who cannot or will not completely give themselves to this simple program, usually men and women who are constitutionally incapable of being honest with themselves. There are such unfortunates. They are not at fault; they seem to have been born that way. They are naturally incapable of grasping and developing a *way of life* which demands rigorous honesty. Their chances are less than average. There are those, too, who suffer from grave emotional and mental disorders, but many of them do recover if they have the capacity to be honest.

Our stories disclose in a general way what we used to be like, what happened, and what we are like now. If you have decided you want what we have and are willing to go to any length to get it - then you are ready to *follow directions*.

At some of these you *may* balk. You may think you can find an easier, softer way. We *doubt if you* can. With all the earnestness at our command, we beg of you to be fearless and thorough from the very start. Some of us have tried to hold on to our old ideas and the result was nil until we let go absolutely.

Remember that you *are dealing* with alcohol cunning, baffling, powerful! Without help it is too much for you. But there is One who has all power - That One is God. You must find Him now!

Half measures *will avail* you nothing. You *stand* at the turning point. Throw *yourself under* His protection and care with complete abandon.

How we think you can take it! Here are the steps we took, which are suggested as your Program of Recovery:

1. Admitted we were powerless over alcohol - that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care *and direction* of God as we understood Him.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely willing *that* God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly, on our *knees*, asked Him to remove our shortcomings - *holding nothing back*.

8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make *complete* amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our contact with God, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry it out.
12. Having had a spiritual experience as the result of this *course of action*, we tried to carry this message to *others, especially alcoholics*, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

You *may* exclaim, "What an order! I can't go through with it." Do not be discouraged. No one among us has been able to maintain anything like perfect adherence to these principles. We are not saints. The point is, that we are willing to grow along spiritual lines. The principles we have set down are guides to progress. We claim spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection.

Our description of the alcoholic, the chapter to the agnostic, and our personal adventures before and after, *have been designed* to sell you three pertinent ideas;

- (a) That you *are* alcoholic and cannot manage your own life.
- (b) That probably no human power *can* relieve your alcoholism.
- (c) That God *can and will*.

If you are not convinced on these vital issues, you ought to re-read the book to this point or else throw it away!

A complete copy of the draft form of the original Big Book is available for \$10. Send check or money order to:

General Fund
General Service Board of AA, Inc.
P.O. Box 459
Grand Central Station
New York, NY 10163

LOVE isn't put in
your heart to Stay.
LOVE isn't
LOVE
Till you Give It Away.



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Harry D., Founder and Editor 1892-1968

VOL. 43 OCTOBER 1984 NO. 1

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 1984-8:00 P.M.
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ALL GROUP REPRESENTATIVES WELCOME
BE INFORMED

IN MEMORIAM

Our deepest sympathy to the families & friends of below deceased members of our fellowship.

STEVEN SCHULTZ, Two year member of North Olmsted Group.

TED BUTLER, Esquire Group

JOE HOWARD, 14 year member of Parma Hts., Group.

PHIL RAUB, 19 year member of Strongsville Group in Florida.

DAVID BROWN, 2 year member of the Solon Group.

RAY PERKOWSKI, member of the Thursday Closed Men's.

THOSE MISSING FACES

As my sobriety continues, I search for faces that once were familiar. Where have they gone? Where is the guy who wanted help with his Eighth Step?

I make a phone call, and the answer has a tone of avoidance. Not a blunt denial - just avoidance.

Over coffee, I discuss the missing faces and ask, "Has anyone seen Tom, Dick, or Harry"? Nope!

Each week, I go to groups other than my own, so I have a fairly wide acquaintance throughout our area. The other groups also have missing faces. What happens? Why are these faces missing?

Usually, ultimately, such absence means that the missing face is not living a sober, joy-filled life. I have yet to encounter a missing face who is happy. One thing about a missing face is the endless stream of logic it spouts to explain why it is missing.

It is perhaps sad that these faces are missing, but as long as my face is at a meeting, I really won't be sad. I'm growing by going to meetings, and I know that I need not cry for the missing ones. Somehow, some way, they may come back and begin again in AA fellowship. For me, the meaning of the program is a steady increase in joyful awareness of life and love.

Don't be a missing face. Get to more meetings, and grow.

"Around the Tables"
Grapevine, March 1976

9 WAYS TO ACHIEVE PEACE OF MIND

(Some years ago, Duke University made an exhaustive survey to determine the principles of living by which most people achieve happiness.

1. **Shun suspicion and resentment** Nursing a grudge has been found to pull down happiness levels an average of fifty percent.

2. **Live in the present and the future.** Most unhappiness stems from an unwholesome pre-occupation with the mistakes and failures of the past. These are important only as your passport to a better and wiser today. Forgive yourself freely for past mistakes. It is vital to your happiness as forgiving others.

3. **Don't waste time and energy fighting conditions you can't change.** There is little you can do personally about stopping a war. . . healing the incurable disease of a loved one . . . or changing the nature and habits of those with whom you have to live. So stop hurling yourself against stone walls.

4. **Co-operate with life**-instead of trying to demolish it, or run away from it.

5. **When you find yourself in the grip of emotional stress,** force yourself to be out-going to other people, instead of retreating within yourself and building a prison of loneliness.

6. **Refuse to pity yourself,** or seek self-justification in easy alibis that make you appear "noble" to yourself and others.

7. **Cultivate the old-fashioned virtues** of love, honor, loyalty, thrift and church attendance.

8. **Stop expecting too much of yourself:** When there is too wide a gap between the standards and goals you have set for yourself-and your actual achievement—unhappiness is inevitable. If you can't improve your performance, aim for standards which are within your reach.

9. **Find something bigger than yourself in which to believe.** Self-centered materialistic people scored lowest in the Duke University tests for measuring happiness. While those who average high in altruism and religious attitudes generally come out with the top happiness ratings.

Here's How



"But I say a bar is a home improvement"

FROM THE DESK OF GOD

Dear Friend,

I just had to send you a note to tell you how much I love you and care about you. I saw you yesterday as you were talking with your friends. I waited all day hoping you would want to talk with me also. As evening drew near, I gave you a beautiful sunset to close your day and a cool breeze to rest you, and I waited but you never came. It hurt but I still love you.

I saw you fall asleep last night and I longed to touch your brow so I spilled moonlight on your pillow and your face. Again I waited, wanting to rush down so that we could talk. I have so many gifts I want to give you...but you awakened late the next day and rushed off to work. My tears were in the rain.

Today you looked so sad, so all alone. It makes my heart ache because I understand. Oh, if you would only listen to me. I really love you. I try to tell you in the blue sky and in the quiet green grass. I whisper it in the leaves on the trees and breathe it in the colors of the flowers. I shout it in the mountain streams and give the birds love songs to sing. I clothe you with warm sunshine and perfume the air with nature's scents. My love for you is deeper than the oceans and bigger than the biggest want or need in your heart.

If you only knew how much I want to help you. I can show you the way just by your asking me and talking to me. Please don't forget me. I have so much I want to share with you but I won't push or hassle you any further.

You are free to call me...it is up to you. I'll be waiting.

Your friend,
GOD
Tyler Texas
(Anonymous)

Have you heard: About the new foam mattresses?
You take a water bed and fill it with beer.

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LIVE AND LET LIVE

At many of our meeting places, a number of catch phrases are prominently displayed. These printed placards are reminders of thought processes that could and should be employed by us as we trudge along the path of serenity and sobriety.

Not only are these slogans guides to how we treat ourselves, but they also provide insights on how to treat others. Of these five slogans - But for the Grace of God, Easy Does It, First Things First, Live and Let Live, and Think Think Think - Live and Let Live is by far the most ignored and abused slogan.

What does Live and Let Live mean? To the majority of we AA members, it simply means cultivate your own garden and allow others to farm theirs as they see fit. But many of us just can't leave well enough alone. There is nothing more interesting to listen to or talk about than half-truths. The more half-baked the issue, the more sensational the discussion. And, if it is not sensational, we make it so through the use of innuendo or other shock treatment methods We revel and wallow in gossip. We seem to enjoy the unsubstantiated pain of others.

Most of us do not pay total attention to what is said at meetings. We listen with one ear and watch with one eye. But by doing so, we only get half the story and we pass on our perception of what we thought we heard. Since we hear what we want to hear, the retransmitted information becomes our fabrication of the "truth."

Well now, how do we handle the problem? In order to talk from a knowledgeable position, one solution is to pay attention and get the whole story Another solution is to tend to your own business. Notwithstanding these two options, another, but best, solution is to pay attention, get the whole story and keep your thoughts and comments to yourself. The advantages to this last option are evident in that you learn a great deal and you do not contribute to the pain of others.

Many of us have been hurt by the unthinking transmittal of erroneous information. Reputations have been sullied, personal pain has been experienced. Confusion as to the integrity of the program abounds, because we marched off - egos blaring our importance and position in AA.

All of us need to press forward and combat the gossip problems. Each of us can support the effective remedy of the problem. We need to pass on sobriety not gossip.

However, if you must talk about others, talk about winners and their brand of sobriety. Any other topic of discussion is inappropriate.

Yours in Serenity,
Chuck M.
New Reporter
Washington, D.C.

THE MAGIC OF AA

The magic of AA is not magic at all, or is it?? What was done by our founders was to put into action concepts that were known for hundreds of years. I thought the concept of "born again" was for religious zealots. Now I understand that a person can change radically and overnight. He can be a falling down drunk for years only to enter AA and stay sober. How and why? It is hard to explain.

Is it magic or miracles? the Big Book says not miracles but a spiritual -awakening that can come at once or gradually . . .

I thought I was very sophisticated. I thought I knew all the answers. I planned and I controlled or thought I did. I brssed and told people what to do in work. But the magic of AA says don't tell people what to do. Show them by example: "I quit drinking. You can to." This is the principle of Permission. Some spend thousands of dollars with doctors seeking an authority, a permission to quit drinking. And it often does not work. You have to have an equal, a fellow drunk to say: "I sobered up. You can too." Yes, most of AA's magic/miracles can be explained. Just like when the prophet Jesus was teaching the sharing of a few loaves of bread and fishes to hundreds of people. The natural explanation was the people shared what they had with their fellow man next to them. Or was it really the loaves of bread and fish that fed hundreds??

END

Ralph W.

Sister Ignatia Group

THE TWENTY-THIRD PSALM

The Lord is my Sponsor: I shall not want. He maketh me to go to many meetings. He leadeth me to sit back, relax, and listen with an open mind; He restoreth my soul, my sanity, and my health; He leadeth me in the paths of Sobriety, Serenity, and Fellowship for mine own sake.

He teacheth me to think, to take it easy, to live and let live, and to do first things first.

He maketh me honest, humble, and grateful; He teacheth me to accept the things I cannot change, to change the things that I can, and giveth me the wisdom to know the difference.

Yea though I walk through the valley of despair, frustration, guilt, and remorse, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me: Thy program, Thy way of life, Thy twelve steps. . . they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies - rationalization, fear, anxiety, self-pity, and resentment: Thou anointest my confused mind and jangled nerves with knowledge, understanding, and hope: no longer am I alone, neither am I afraid, nor sick, nor helpless, nor hopeless: My cup runneth over.

Surely Sobriety and Serenity shall follow me every day of my life, twenty-four hours at a time: As I surrender my will to Thine and carry Thy message to others: and I will dwell in the house of my Higher Power, as I understand Him, daily, forever and ever. Amen.

IT DOES HAPPEN

Something interesting happened to me recently and I'd like to pass it on. I told it at my home group meeting and the folks got quite a laugh out of it.

On July 4th, I purchased a microwave oven at Sears. I liked the salesman and when he offered me his card, I took it. A few weeks later, I called him and again went to Sears to purchase a gas range. The salesman wrote up the sale and told me that they would deliver on the 14th. I remarked that he couldn't do that. "Why not," he asked. I told him that October 17th is on a Wednesday and the 14th is on a Sunday. He laughed and told me that he was talking about August 14th. I apologized, saying that I was preoccupied with October 17th. He then asked if that date was my birthday; and when I said no, it's a special day; he asked if it was my anniversary. To which, I said yes, but not a wedding anniversary. Then he shocked me by saying, "Your AA anniversary!"

I stared at him and asked how in the devil did he know that. He laughed and told me that he was a "people watcher;" and about a year ago he noticed me in the store, talking to another salesman. He went on to say that I looked in pretty bad shape that day, and he figured that I was probably an alcoholic. Well, I told him that he was right, but wondered how he figured that out. He replied, "I'm an alcoholic too! Been sober 15 years." Boy, did we have a good laugh.

How well he made me aware that you can't con an old con. He must have overheard my conversation that day, a year ago, with the other salesman. I was denying that I had been drinking - most convincingly so, I thought - and insisting that I only had medicine on my breath!

Today, I'm sober, truthfully sober, and I count the days until October 17th - one whole year of sobriety. On that day, I'll honestly feel that I've joined the Fellowship and have a good chance to make it.

Sincerely,

Arnold D.

Lanham, Md.

What some men pray to God for is not that His will be done, but that He approves of theirs.

ARE YOU PLANNING TO MOVE?

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IT WILL HELP YOU AND IT WILL HELP US.



TRADITIONS 'DREW THE LINE' LONG AGO

In more and more A.A. meetings today, people announce themselves as being an alcoholic and then add whatever their second affliction may be, i.e.: I'm an alcoholic and drug addict; I'm an alcoholic and a pillhead; I'm an alcoholic cross-addicted; or I'm chemically addicted and alcoholic.

This identification process which originates in treatment centers, has slowly crept into common usage at our meetings. While there is nothing basically wrong with the ideal here, is it really necessary that we announce our secondary afflictions? And maybe more to the point, should we continue to allow it?

Thank God for the treatment centers that are sending so many newcomers to A.A., as we surely want and need these people. However, we do not necessarily need the treatment center practices that they bring with them. Treatment centers generally consider alcohol to be only another drug, and their treatment is for all types of addiction. In A.A. we should only be concerned with alcohol and the more we assimilate treatment center practices, jargon, and ideas into our A.A. meetings, the further we are moving away from our primary purpose of staying sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.

There are many people today that would like to change the name of A.A. to stand for Addicts Anonymous. In fact, the way membership is going in some groups, that is not too far from actuality. If this practice of announcing one's secondary problem continues to grow, it won't be long before we will be hearing announcements like: I'm alcoholic and food addicted; I'm alcoholic and gambling addicted; I'm alcoholic and homosexual; or I'm alcoholic and a bad housekeeper.

When and where will we draw the line? If we go back to basics and abide by the Traditions-the line was drawn for us a long time ago. The only topic of discussion that we are supposed to deal with at A.A. meetings is our alcoholism. However, if we continue to allow people to announce their secondary problems at meetings, then we are tacitly acknowledging that they can bring their other problems up for discussion or include them in their drunkalog.

How do we reverse this trend without scaring off the newcomer and maybe offending some that are not so new? First off, if they are truly alcoholic and ready for the program, they will not be scared off by an explanation of what A.A. can and cannot help them with. Probably the best way to reverse the trend is to generally

explain the purpose and the limitations of A.A. as often as possible at meetings. Special meetings on the Third Tradition could be help. Also, whenever an appropriate opening arises at meetings, we can make a general objection to the announcement of secondary problems at A.A. Sponsors and older members can explain the sole purpose of A.A. on a one-on-one basis when an opportunity arises with someone they are working with.

We should be careful though, not to point fingers or embarrass anyone during a meeting by telling them that they are out of order. After all, it is the announcement of secondary problems that we are objecting to, not the person or the problem itself.

THE ONLY REQUIREMENT FOR A.A. MEMBERSHIP IS A DESIRE TO STOP DRINKING. The only problem that should be brought into A.A. meetings is our alcoholism or problems caused by our alcoholism. The only announcement should be that "I'm an alcoholic!" After all, that says everything that we need to know.

D.G.

"Kentuckiana News"
Danville, KY. A.A.

A PRESENCE IN THE ROOM

Its 8:29 PM and I wish the secretary would start the meeting before I explode. You may be thinking, hey this group has got a problem. Well I'm glad to say I don't, I've had a very good day, in fact it was a beautiful day.

Let me explain. When I first came into the fellowship they told me to get active picking up ashtrays, putting away tables and chairs ect. and it really helped me.

One day I was approached by a secretary to come down early, two hours early and make coffee. That was over a year ago and I still love doing it.

If you never have arrived that early at a meeting I suggest you try it. Something beautiful happens.

I'm usually the first one there and the room is dark, musty, and empty.

Soon a fellow AA or two arrive and a sort of presence comes into the room, the room starts to have a glow to it.

Soon a few more AA's arrive, then a few more, and then more, till the room is filled. Not just filled with people but filled with a presence of GOD, and I'm ready to explode with a feeling of joy, happiness and serenity.

The lead acts like a stabilizer to keep those feelings alive and the Lords prayer at the end is the total climax.

Believe me when I tell you there is a presence at a AA meeting. If you don't believe me get there early and find out for yourself.

Mark

CENTRAL



BULLETIN

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Harry D.. Founder and Editor 1892-1968

VOL. 43 NOVEMBER 1984 NO. 2

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 4th, 1984—8:00 P.M.

OLD STONE CHURCH - PUBLIC SQUARE
CLEVELAND, OHIO

ALL GROUP REPRESENTATIVES WELCOME
BE INFORMED ELECTION

IN MEMORIAM

Our deepest sympathy to the families & friends of below deceased members of our fellowship.

MOSE YODER, well known active and dedicated old timer, November 15, 1984.

VIRGIL CAREY, secretary of Pearl Road Group, November 8, 1984.

RESPECT-EARNED OR DESERVED

Where is it written that as recovering/recovered alcoholics, society ought to "treat us better." All too often we hear our compatriots in sobriety decrying their trials and tribulations as the result of society's insensitivity to the AA alcoholic's struggle for sobriety and serenity.

We allow our serenity to be disrupted because of the action of others. We perceive that when society expects or demands that we be responsible, they don't understand the philosophy of "Easy Does it" or "Let Go and Let God." When events don't go our way, we look to why people don't understand us. We seldom seem to recognize our contribution to the situation, always demanding that our serenity remain inviolate. Forgetting that serenity comes from within and is not the result of the real world around us.

Society has watched us fall into the depths of our disease. Our friends have anguished in our dilemma. Society has observed our previously futile attempts at solitary sobriety and, in pain, they have watched our tripping and stumbling. Our families have listened to our solemn vows of abstinence only to experience the pain of our defeat. They, too, have a track record to review. True, it is our drinking record, but it is the only record they have knowledge of and intimacy with.

Society wholeheartedly supports our growth in AA. They want us sober. They want us productive. They want us responsive and responsible. But we must also remember their humanness.

What is wrong with our unquestioned re-acceptance of responsibility? What is wrong with society asking, no demanding, that we do so? Nothing! We, as AA members, are not allowed the luxury of retreat from duty under the flag of "I don't feel like it" or "I'm not strong enough, yet." If we fail after trying, so be it. But if we fail to try, what then?

Growth is painful. Attainment of serenity is painful. Respect is earned not deserved. Respect is attained the old fashioned way - you earn it. Earn it by demonstrating to society that as an AA member you welcome responsibility and that you do not back away from duty. We prove we are productive, responsive and responsible members of the human race through implementation of our legacies - sobriety, unity and service - not only to AA but to all we come in contact with.

Yours in Sobriety,
Chuck M.
New Reporter

ARE YOU GUILTY?

Today there are many coming to the GOD given fellowship of A.A. and in about six months time become self-licensed Diagnosticians, Physicians, Counselors, etc. In effect, they are practicing everything without a license.

This has been true for some time now. Last week was the last straw for this alcoholic. An individual, leading a meeting, condemned all medication, including aspirin, as a "SLIP":

Our Fellowship tells us that, "we neither endorse nor oppose any causes." Like Hades! Some oppose everything that comes down the road. They oppose Treatment Centers, Doctors, Psychiatrists, Counselors, Etc...but they talk like they are all of these wrapped into one. Why can't they hear what GOD is telling them through the fellowship of A.A.: "We neither endorse nor oppose any causes."

Are you one who is practicing medicine without a license?

Are you a self-appointed counselor?

Are you a self-ordained Minister?

If you are...practice it outside of the A.A. meetings and not from behind the Podium.

If you are...I wonder how many people you have killed!!

I have been IN (not around) A.A. for some time now, and I want A.A. to remain just as our founders and the pioneers gave it to us. I want nothing that I say to change any part of A.A. I do not want my silence to be a part of any change.

As things are going, the next thing that we will find is that A.A. has been changed to...P.A.N . . . Pills, Alcohol, Narcotics Anonymous.

Bill W. cautions us very clearly in a letter written in 1966..."This is why sobriety, freedom from alcohol, through the teachings and practice of A.A.'s Twelve Steps, is the SOLE purpose of the GROUP. If we do not stick to this cardinal principle, we shall almost certainly collapse...And if we collapse, we cannot help anyone."

Tony H.

Anonymity-Our Spiritual Foundation

We alcoholics are the biggest rationalizers in the world. Fortified with the excuse that we are doing great things for AA, we can, through broken anonymity, resume our old and disastrous pursuit of personal power and prestige, public honors, and money - the same implacable urges that, when frustrated, once caused us to drink.

Few of us are anonymous so far as our daily contacts go. We have dropped anonymity at this level because we think our friends and associates ought to know about AA and what it has done for us. We also wish to lose the fear of admitting that we are alcoholics. Though we earnestly request reporters not to disclose our identities, we frequently speak before semipublic gatherings. We wish to convince audiences that our alcoholism is a sickness we no longer fear to discuss before anyone.

"In some sections of AA, anonymity is carried to the point of real absurdity Members are on such a poor basis of communication that they don't even know each other's last names or where each lives..."

"...there isn't the slightest objection to groups who wish to remain strictly anonymous, or to people who think they would not like their membership in AA known at all. That is their business, and this is a very natural reaction.

"However, most people find that anonymity to this degree is not necessary, or even desirable. Once one is fairly sober, and sure of this, there seems to reason for failing to talk about AA membership in the right places. This has a tendency to bring in other people. Word of mouth is one of the most important communications..."

Bill W. (As Bill Sees It)

BEING 'TRUSTED SERVANT' CAN BE LONELY

Have you been intimidated by remarks overheard at your meetings, such as "This is an A.A. meeting; I didn't come here to listen to a lot of announcements about service, work or money"? Not only is the discussion of group funds appropriate in the meeting, it is necessary if a group wishes to follow the guidelines of our Twelve Traditions.

Granted, it is difficult to bring up such matters against seemingly overwhelming resistance. Keep in mind this may not be the attitude of the group as a whole, but of some individual member. We are but trusted servants, and that sometimes can feel like a lonely position.

The responsible Treasurer/Secretary will cultivate enough humility to talk about money. Of course, if we are more concerned with our popularity than the welfare of the group and A.A. as a whole, we are not being either responsible or realistic.

The responsible Treasurer/Secretary will discard that old threadbare, (no dues or fees) and quote, "we are fully self-supporting through the voluntary contributions of our members." It is one thing to say we are self-supporting. We really should be that way.

But, month after month, some groups fail to distribute their excess funds to any service office. Every Intergroup Office in existence is understaffed, operates under a continuous cloud of anxiety about whether there will be enough contributions to meet their expenses

Let's all do what we can to be responsible trusted servants, governed by the Ultimate Authority as defined by our Traditions.

Jackie B.
"News & Views"
Madison, Wi. A.A.

WHY WORRY???

In this life there are only two things to worry about...

Either you will be rich or you will be poor...

If you are rich, you have nothing to worry about.

If you are poor, you have only two things to worry about...

Either you will be healthy or you will be sick...

If you are healthy, you will have nothing to worry about.

If you are sick, you will have only two things to worry about...

You will either get better or you will die.

If you get better and recover, you will have nothing to worry about.

If you die, you will have only two things to worry about...

You will either go to Heaven or you will go to Hell...

If you go to Heaven, you will have nothing to worry about.

If you go to Hell, you will be so darn busy shaking hands with all of your friends that you won't have time to worry.

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I AM RESPONSIBLE

Where would we be today if the early members of A.A. waited for someone to call? They didn't wait for someone to think to themselves, "I think I've got a drinking problem. I'll call Alcoholics Anonymous."

No. They "carried the message to the alcoholic." They went to hospitals. They went to jails. They went to ministers. They went to doctors. They carried the message to the alcoholic.

Are we today sitting back and waiting for the alcoholic to call?

Our early members of the Fellowship had visions of hospitals, recovery houses, detox centers, and other things for the alcoholic. But they found out that these were out of our realm. But they worked with them. They cooperated with them. Do we, today, work with, or cooperate with these people as much as our early members did? Our early members of A.A. found out that we could not be affiliated with these facilities or professions, but they made ideal places to find the "alcoholic who still suffers."

Today, we in Alcoholics Anonymous, in my opinion, are at another threshold of growth in our Fellowship. Now there are many detox centers, hospitals, and recovery houses for the alcoholic. Some, and I believe it should be most, of these places want Alcoholics Anonymous to come and carry the message to the alcoholics who are suffering there.

But what do we hear from the members of A.A.? "I won't go there; they make money off the drunks." "I don't like that doctor." "They're all a bunch of retreats." "They can't keep sober." "They won't listen."

What better place to go? In most cases they (the residents or the alcoholics who still suffer) haven't had a drink for a few hours. They are coherent, and this beats some of the Twelfth Step calls I've been on. The chances are they're not going to pass out right when you get warmed up with your pitch.

And if I go to a facility or an office to carry the message, I'm not there to tell them how to run the place. I am guided by the Twelve Traditions they are not. I am there for one purpose: to carry the message of A.A. to the alcoholic who still suffers.

If I go to a detox, as I have, to help to start a meeting of A.A., I go there for one purpose: to start a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous. I'm not there to tell them that they shouldn't give pills or medication. I'm not there to tell them that each patient should have "one teaspoon of honey each hour," or "make sure that they have plenty of vitamins." I'm there to carry the message of Alcoholics Anonymous.

I will do what I can to let them know the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous is ready to come to them, not to tell them what to do, but to cooperate with them in helping the alcoholic who still suffers. And I will let them know what we cannot do. I must impress on the professionals that there is only one thing that I have for the alcoholic, and that is a message of hope. I will not go to them to tell them what they should do with the alcoholic. If asked what to do, I will share ex-

periences of mine and the Fellowship of A.A. But I will remind them that I'm not a professional. I am a drunk that has found a way to live, one day at a time, through a program of Twelve Steps taken from a book called "Alcoholics Anonymous." My activities in this Fellowship are guided by Twelve Traditions that apply to me and not to the professional. I am grateful to God, as I understand Him, for giving me this chance to serve. To help to carry the message of A.A. to the alcoholic who still suffers through cooperating with, or working with, the professional.

Let us stop being concerned about how a treatment facility or a professional does their work for the alcoholic. Let us be concerned with one thing. Let us carry the message of Alcoholics Anonymous to the suffering alcoholics. Let us try.

GRATITUDE

Gratitude is a must for us - not only feeling grateful, but showing we are grateful. But how does one ever show true gratitude for AA?

As grateful alcoholics, learning to live with a subtle, progressive, and lethal illness we have a fighting chance on a day-to-day, hour-by-hour basis to be of some use to ourselves, our families, and our communities. We may even achieve magnificent and beneficent things if we choose.

The grateful AA member learns bit by bit what life is all about. We learn to live without lies, without conning people, and especially, without trying to be somebody we're not. In essence, we unlearn all the "skills" we had developed in order to justify our addictive behavior.

Then too, grateful alcoholics attend several meetings a week: To let others know we care; To welcome the newcomer with friendship and understanding; And to pass on the message of how to live without taking a drink.

* * * * *

While on the subject of marriage, there was this guy who said that he hadn't been able to sleep a wink since his wife ran away. His buddy asked, "Why don't you try counting sheep?"

To which, he replied, "I'm too busy counting my lucky stars."

ARE YOU PLANNING TO MOVE?

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IT WILL HELP YOU AND IT WILL HELP US.



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VOL. XLIII-NO. 3

Dear Imogene, Isabel and all the staff.

This is my first holiday note. I've just finished reading the Cleveland "Central Bulletin" and want you to know I think it is excellent!

You've tackled (in editorials and letters) some of the really important problems — so many in this issue: 1) "Drawing the Line Between Alcoholism and other Addictions;" 2) 'Are You Guilty? of Playing God?' 3) 'Anonymity' — the pros and well as the cons of letting others know we're members of AA (as long as we never mention others); 4) the many groups who never talk about money, have regular reports, or contribute on the suggested % basis; and 5) the responsibility of working with suffering alcoholics in various treatment centers. All that plus 'Gratitude' and the "Presence" that comes when we are gathered together of one mind and with one purpose.

I'm more involved in Tyler than I was in Cleveland — but I hope always to keep the tie with the office which took my call (Dick and "Mary") and my many AA Cleveland friends.

I can see a great difference in sponsorship customs in Cleveland, and, apparently, all over Texas. Because one asks someone to be a sponsor here, the shy person (and sometimes the very critical) never get around to it. I love the Cleveland custom (though one can always change if one desires) and the fact that there is usually a sponsor — and a cosponsor to explain and guide the newcomer to meetings and literature and the steps.

Merry Christmas to you all!

Affectionally,
Dorothy DeG

SPEAKING OF LOVE...

People are unreasonable, illogical and self centered. Love them anyway.

If you do good, people will accuse you of selfish ulterior motives. Do good anyway.

The good you do today will be forgotten tomorrow. Do good anyway.

Honesty and frankness make you vulnerable. Be honest and frank anyway.

People favor underdogs but follow only top dogs. Fight for some underdogs anyway.

What you spend years building may be destroyed overnight. Build anyway.

People really need help but may attack you if you help them. Help them anyway.

Give the world the best you have...it may not be appreciated but give the world YOUR BEST...ANYWAY...



Season's Greetings



THE TWELVE TRADITIONS

(The Long Form)

I've been in AA for over three years now, and am very grateful for what has been freely given me.

I was recently at a small discussion group in my area, where the topic of "Gossip in A.A." was raised, and talked about between the few of us who were in attendance.

I don't want to get into any specifics regarding gossip other than to say for me, the bottom line is: KEEP MY MOUTH SHUT!

If I'm going to criticize anyone, good, or bad, it should be myself.

I'm in A.A. to learn about the program, so I can pass on What I Know to the alcoholic who still suffers.

I need to be spending my time learning, and studying the program so when I do have something to say, I'll know what I'm talking about. Not wasting mine and someone else's time discussing another's affairs.

I recently discovered, "THE TWELVE TRADITIONS" (The Long Form) in the "BIG BOOK," while studying it, and was surprised, because I didn't even know a (long form) existed.

TRADITION TWELVE:

"And finally, we of Alcoholics Anonymous believe that the principle of Anonymity has an immense spiritual significance. It reminds us that we are to place Principles before Personalities; that we are actually to practice a genuine Humility. This to the end that our great blessings may never spoil us; that we shall forever live in thankful contemplation of him who presides over us all,

C.C.

Back to Basics

FREEDOM

I've felt the pain of seeing myself in a state of total darkness. I had nothing, nowhere to run. I had to face the truth of what I had become.

My friend had tricked me into a prison of emptiness. He who let me laugh, now made me cry. He who gave love, left me lonely. He who put me on top of the world, took my life. It left me helpless and welcoming death.

All was not lost for I chose to find another way of life. I left my only friend and enemy. I found a place where I belonged. Always welcome and forgiven. I learned a way of life where I had a loving, caring Higher Power instead of a destroying one.

Today my heart sings of joy and love. I have found Peace on Earth and within myself. I have overcome loneliness, self-hate and despair. Today I can share my life and my love.

Audrey F. Back To Basics

CENTRAL BULLETIN



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Harry D., Founder and Editor 1692.1966

Vol. 43 December 1984 No. 3

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING
TUESDAY, JANUARY 8th, 1985-8:00 P.M.
OLD STONE CHURCH-PUBLIC SQUARE
CLEVELAND, OHIO-ONTARIO ENTRANCE
REPRESENTATIVES FROM EACH GROUP
WELCOME-BE INFORMED

G.S.R. THIRD LEGACY MEETING
SUNDAY, JANUARY 20, 1985-2:00 P.M.
ST JOSEPH'S CHURCH-MANTUA, OHIO
ST RTE. 44 & PIONEER TRAIL
ONE MILE SOUTH OF ROUTE 82

IN MEMORIAM

Our deepest sympathy to the families & friends of below deceased members of our fellowship.

WM. (BUFFALO) McALPINE—LONG TIME
MEMBER OF THE ANGLE GROUP

WHY ME, LORD?

"Why me, lord?" Torment, frustration, anger, drunken stupors, all brought on by my stupidity, and yet, over and over again, I'd repeat this question, putting the blame where it didn't belong.

Alcoholics seem to be people wallowing in their own self-pity, and true to form, I cherished every minute of it, finally completely losing control over my entire life, unable to function as a stable human being. I began to survive like an animal, knowing the consequences I'd have to pay and not caring — creeping along day by day, existing until the time came when I knew I couldn't go on. Since my senses were dulled by abuse of alcohol, I consider it a miracle that this even occurred. What do I do? Where do I go? Who'll help me? — never once asking, "How do I help myself?"

Fortunately, I found what I was seeking. In the fellowship of the A.A. program I discovered others like myself who searched for freedom from the problem of alcoholism. Statistics show that the number of alcoholics is increasing daily; so therefore, all of us can consider ourselves as "chosen ones" when we hear this.

Yet even now I sometimes have recurring bouts of self-pity, and I ask, "Why me, Lord?" Why did all those awful things have to happen to me?" Then I think of the present and all I have to be grateful for: my wonderful life, my friends and the fellowship.

"Why me, Lord?"

Why not me?

Pat N., Chicago, IL

ALWAYS • CAREFUL • TO • INVESTIGATE • OTHERS • NEEDS

THE - PURPOSE OF AA

"Alcoholics Anonymous helps the individual create within himself a spiritual, physiological change. AA is not trying to start a mass movement for the betterment of the whole human race. AA's are NOT banded together for the purpose of educating the general public on the problem of alcoholism but for the prime purpose of helping the individual alcoholic with his alcoholic problem. AA, as a society, is not primarily interested in hospitalization, psychiatry of theology. These are all a part of the education of the individual alcoholic and he learns to use as much or as little as he needs in the solution of his personal problem.

"AA is not a CURE for alcoholism. AA is a society of alcoholics who have found a successful method of staying sober and who are trying to pass that information on to other alcoholics who are looking for a way to rid themselves of the obsession to drink. AA did not come into being to make a public show of the alcoholic, he can and does that job expertly himself, but rather to give the alcoholic a sanctuary where he can get help from other alcoholics.

"AA exists today, not because of the vast amount of publicity, but in spite of it. The reason it does exist is because it continues to help the individual alcoholic, and shows him how he can not only help himself but can help others who have the same disease, and show him how he can make amends for some of the havoc he has created in the world and show him how he can do this and still remain anonymous himself if that is his wish."

—From HERE'S HOW

- T R Y -

If at first you do not succeed, try, try again. That is one of the pluses of AA. We recognize that we can fail. It is OK to fail. The only real failure is giving up and not trying again.

We see AA's stand up to read the AA Creed only to pause and stumble over the lines. So what? We don't have to be perfect. Our hands can shake, our voices break. It does not matter. (It usually takes a year of sobriety to pronounce "AN-ON-NIM-ITY.")

It is a fact, the more you try to comment or lead on anything, the easier it will become. I sing with a choral group.

I sometimes get very self conscious to the point of just losing it. I asked the leader as he sings the national anthem before thousands. He told me; "you don't get over it, you learn to handle it with experience. Nobody is perfect. Especially in singing, anyone, anytime can go off key & lose the lines.

Ralph W.
 Sister Ignatia

A drunk walked into a tavern, and saw above the bar a sign, announcing "All you can drink • \$1.00!"

"All you can drink:" said the drunk to the bartender, "Give me \$2.00 worth."

WHEN IN DOUBT, DO NOTHING

A famous General uttered the above words. They may apply to many situations in life, but not to a drunk. He must do something. He can continue to be a drunk, continue to ruin his life and the lives of people who love him. Lose job after job, or ruin his health and lose his health and lose his sanity, or he can take the first step. All he has to do is admit he is powerless over alcohol.

To admit you are an alcoholic is one of the hardest things you will ever have to do. Haven't you said a thousand times you can stop drinking any time you want to? Yet, you know perfectly well you could not. Haven't you said after being drunk for days or weeks, "Today I will taper off and just have a few drinks," and end up just as drunk as ever?

Contrary to what some people still think, there is nothing to be ashamed of in admitting you are an alcoholic. There was a time when this was not so. There was a time when people were ashamed to admit a relation had cancer or a mental disease or tuberculosis or any of a number of so called hush-hush diseases, Today we are more enlightened. Today we know an alcoholic has an incurable disease called ALCOHOLISM.

Incurable? Yes Once an alcoholic, always an alcoholic. However, like some other incurable diseases, it can be arrested and the alcoholic can lead a useful and productive life.

It is for the alcoholic to decide which part to take. One leads to sure insanity or death, the other to a happy and sober life.

-Chit Chat, Robesonia, Pa.

FAITH

Faith doesn't create, it reveals. Faith is to the soul what the telescope is to the astronomer or the microscope is to the scientist. These instruments reveal but do not create.

C Edwin Brown

Be a Bulletin Booster

AT YEARS END

At years end, we almost always seem to sense intensified emotions about giving, receiving, gratitude, love and the like. During this season, we also feel the need to review and measure actual growth against some self-imposed standard.

MEASUREMENT: Actual vs Perceived Growth

Central to this measurement process is the advice and counsel of others. The others can be your home group or better yet individual sponsor or sponsors. You can decide the make-up of your sponsor support system.

But it is singularly important that the support system be made up of people you trust, who will tell you what you need to hear - not what you want to hear - and will assist in the development of your sobriety/serenity goals.

The support system therefore provides comments about your growth - growth as seen by others, not by you. Sobriety and serenity is a team effort. Failure to involve others in your growth slows the strengthening of your new life foundation.

GIVING/RECEIVING:

You will not get anything out of AA unless you put something in. The AA program is constant. In the struggle for serenity, effort must always exceed opportunity. It is axiomatic that measure for measure, AA group amount out is always greater than collective individual effort in.

Oh, I know there are no fees, we have already paid our dues. But this philosophy applies to financial responsibility. However, there are other responsibilities other than fiscal. These other responsibilities encompass service. Service at all levels. Service at the Group chairs, coffee, chairperson, etc. At the Inter-group/General Service level - WAIA Representative, General Service Representative, (GSR), etc.

Everybody - yes, everybody can find a job in AA. There are, in my opinion, no valid reasons for no service. You may not be physically capable of toting a 100-cup coffee urn, but you can be a group representative to the Area Hospital and Institution committee.

GRATITUDE:
What are we grateful for? What should we be grateful for? Each of us has his own thoughts and opinions. There is an area of gratitude that is often neglected. This is gratitude for the old timers.

Gratitude for those who have gone before us. Gratitude for those who labored to erase the moral stigma of our disease. Gratitude to those who met in dark basements and led us out of the backrooms into the light of respectability. Alcoholism was not always a "chic" disease where stopping drinking earned you a medal.

LOVE:

Love of Self - you need to do good things for yourself. Love of Others - doing good things for others. Love of AA - doing good things for AA, such as the previously discussed service.

We - you and I - are responsible for AA's good name.

Yours in sobriety,
Chuck M.

New Reporter
Washington, D.C.

TRUE HUMILITY

Quite often we hear speakers and individuals at AA meetings boast about all the humility they acquired through AA. The fact that they are trying so hard to impress their listeners with their good virtues nullifies their claim to any humility.

Certainly, there are hundreds of men and women in AA who are truly grateful and humble, but they do not display it in public. There are also grateful men and women in every group who are devoting much of their time and money to keep the group together and constantly helping others. These men and women never mention their humility, but it radiates from within and it can be felt by all those around them. These are the men and women who are transforming tears, grief and poverty into love, brotherhood and service.

There are also wealthy and scholarly men and women in AA who are exemplifying true modesty without laying any claim to humility, and as a result they hold the respect of their friends and everyone they come in contact with. Neither do they parade their wealth and education to impress others, but rather they go about helping those who are less fortunate without broadcasting it.

A true example of self-righteousness and humility is found in the Biblical story of the Pharisee and the Publican. The Pharisee, no doubt, was a devout and devoted follower of Judaism. But there he was standing before the altar with his head high thanking God that he was not like the other men and reminding God of all the good deeds he had done. Apparently he thought that he was grateful and humble, but his attitude was one of self-righteousness.

The Publican who dared not look up, but with his eyes downcast said, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

Quite often, speakers and individuals at AA meetings will recite all the benefits of sobriety they gained through AA, but they make it sound a little reminiscent of the Pharisee. I am grateful to God and AA that I am not like some people who can't stay sober. I am grateful that I am not like Jack who got drunk and wrecked his car and is now in jail.

A truly grateful person will always exemplify some humility by ascribing his recovery to the grace of God and to others. A humble person will not compare his virtues with others. Neither will he put his good deeds on display for the public to see, and he will not hide behind false piety. Speakers and individuals may be wise and have a large vocabulary, but they will not impress others unless they admit that it is through the grace of God and the help of others that they are sober.

-Jack Mc, Akron, Ohio

HAPPINESS

One thing I know: the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who will have sought and found how to serve.

-Dr. Albert Schweitzer

Resentments

Resentment is an attempt to make our failure palatable by explaining it in terms of unfair treatment, injustice, etc. But, as a salve for failure, resentment is a cure that is worse than the disease. It is a deadly poison to the spirit, makes happiness impossible, uses up tremendous energy which could go into accomplishment. A vicious cycle is often set up. Resentment is also a "way" or an attempt to wipe out and eradicate, a real or fancied wrong or injustice which has already happened. The resentful person is trying to prove his case before the court of life, so to speak. If he can feel resentful enough and thereby prove the "injustice," some magic process will reward him by making "not so" the event or circumstance which caused the resentment. In this sense, resentment is a mental resistance to, a non-acceptance or something that has already happened. Resentment is an emotional rehashing or re-fighting of some event of the past. You cannot win because you are attempting to do the impossible — to change the past.

Resentment, even when based on real injustice and wrong, is not a way to win. It soon becomes an emotional habit. Habitually feeling that you are a victim of injustice, you begin to picture yourself in a role of a victimized person. You carry around an inner feeling which is looking for an eternal peg to hang itself on. It is then easy to see "evidence" of injustice, or fancy you have been wronged, by the most innocent remark or neutral circumstance. Habitual resentment invariably leads to self-pity, which is the worst possible emotional habit anyone can develop. When these habits have become firmly ensconced, a person does not feel "right" or natural when they are absent. They literally begin to search and look for injustice. Someone has said that such people feel good only when they are miserable.

Remember that your resentment is not caused by other persons, circumstances or events. But it is caused by your own emotional response — your own reaction. You alone have the power over this and you can control it if you firmly convince yourself that resentment and self-pity are not the ways to happiness and success, but ways to defeat and unhappiness.

Reprinted from Kansas City Newsletter

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