



COFFEE POT TALK



NDIAA NEWSLETTER



21B TROLLEY SQUARE
WILMINGTON, DE 19806
302-655-5113
NDINEWSLETTER@GMAIL.COM



SAFETY CARD FOR A.A. GROUPS

(The General Service Office has made this optional statement available as an A.A. service piece for those groups who wish to use it.)

Suggested Statement on Safety

Our group endeavors to provide a safe meeting place for all attendees and encourages each person here to contribute to fostering a secure and welcoming environment in which our meetings can take place. As our Traditions remind us, the formation and operation of an A.A. group resides with the group conscience. Therefore, we ask that group members and others refrain from any behavior which might compromise another person's safety.

Also, please take the precautions you feel are necessary to ensure your own personal safety, for example, walking to your car in a group after a meeting. If a situation should arise where someone feels their safety is in jeopardy, or the situation breaches the law, the individuals involved should take appropriate action. Calling the proper authorities does not go against any A.A. Traditions and is recommended when someone may have broken the law or endangered the safety of another person.

Service Material from the General Service Office

Our Common Welfare

Each member of Alcoholics Anonymous is but a small part of a great whole. A.A. must continue to live or most of us will surely die. Hence our common welfare comes first. But individual welfare follows close afterward.

— Tradition One (Long Form)

It is hoped that our common suffering as alcoholics and our common solution in A.A. will transcend most issues and curtail negative behaviors that could jeopardize the safety of anyone attending an A.A. meeting. Nevertheless, Alcoholics Anonymous is a microcosm of the larger society we exist in. As such, problems found in the outside world can also make their way into the rooms of A.A. For this reason, groups and members discuss the topic of safety — to raise awareness in the Fellowship and to seek through sponsorship, workshops and meetings, to create as safe an environment as possible to carry A.A.'s message of hope and recovery to the still-suffering alcoholic.

100M - 9/17 (GP)

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This months feature article is on the importance of Safety in A.A. It is our job as members to ensure the safety of our fellows. Please read this months feature article, which was written by Shelly C. our outgoing Intergroup Chair Person. It is important that we all know our role in keeping our fellowship safe for every alcoholic who comes through our doors, whether it be physical or virtual doors.

~ Emmy K

Feature Article

When I first came to AA, I was only 16. My first meeting was filled with about ten males and one female and of course me. I sat in the back not knowing why I was there nor what I was really supposed to do. When the chairperson asked if this was anyone's first meeting of AA, I did not raise my hand, so the chairperson said bluntly "how about you in the back, we haven't seen you here before" so I said "Yeah, this is my first time". I sat quietly in the back wanting to leave in the worst way. Almost everyone shared after the speaker "Mike" spoke about his drinking days, they shared like they knew him; personal congratulations on his time, almost like he was a god who had 2 years of continuous sobriety. Once the meeting was completed, they all circled up and started praying; I knew these prayers, finally I can relate to something that is happening around me in this room. I was told by my counselor at school that it might be a good idea to stick around after the meeting to talk with some people, so that maybe they could help me. So, I stuck around outside this church on the steps. I was 16 and could not buy cigarettes yet so I asked "Mike" if I could have a smoke and that is when he asked me if he could give me a ride home. I let him know that I was walking, and my house was only 2 blocks away. He insisted that he gets my phone number so he could help me get to meetings. "Mike" did not ask my name, age, or anything about why I was at the meeting; he just wanted my number. I gave him my number because I thought to myself, he cannot be a bad guy everyone was just talking about how much they liked him in that meeting and how good of a guy he is today, how much he has changed and the vast knowledge of AA he had gained over the last 2 years. "Mike" did not have my sobriety in his best interest, and I found that out a few day later. I went some time ignoring the calls and text messages. I finally needed a ride to a meeting (I am only about 2 weeks sober) so I called "Mike" he agreed to pick me up and take me to a meeting that I could not walk to. This man then begins to talk about how much he knows about AA and that we do not need to go to a meeting all we need is the two of us and a big book. He then proceeded to invade my personal space, I had stated that I do not want to be his friend in that way, I just want to get to this meeting, and I will have my friend pick me up. He was not happy, so I picked up my phone called my friend, he stopped and continued to the meeting location.

Over the next month or so I continued to fall back into my old habits of drinking and partying. I was only 16 and I did not know what was right or wrong. I asked myself "Are all members of AA like this, or is it just me and my fault that this happened?" I convinced myself that all members are like "Mike" and I will never return.

Fast forward to 2012, I joined AA again, this time it is going to be different. I am more vigilant, on my game, looking out for "Mikes". I was scooped up by a group of women some young, some old and they taught me about the gifts of sobriety, they taught me about safety in AA. Women with the

Our principals

Step 2: "Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity."

Tradition 2: "For our group purpose there is but one loving authority - a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern."

Concept 2: "The General Service Conference of A.A. has become, for nearly every practical purpose, the active voice and the effective conscience of our whole Society in its world affairs."

women, men with the men. Speak up when you see a fellow in an “trap” after a meeting. Share your experience with your fellow AA members and maybe it will help someone speak up or have them understand that behavior like “Mikes” is not traditional and is not normal.

Our Yellow Card suggests: Our group endeavors to **provide a safe meeting place** for all attendees and encourages each person here to contribute to **fostering a secure and welcoming environment** in which our meetings can take place.

“Each member of Alcoholics Anonymous is but a small part of a great whole. A.A. must continue to live or most of us will surely die. Hence our common welfare comes first. But individual welfare follows close afterward.” —Tradition One

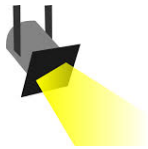
I have learned over the years that AA membership should not be contingent on any one set of behaviors, we come into this program needing to be completely re-wired. Any one person can be sober however cannot quite understand what behavior is acceptable. Let us help these people understand, through our sponsorship, friendship, of fellows of AA. Remember that if someone’s safety is in question and is against the law, help that person speak up. Do not take actions into your own hands, just provide a guiding hand of AA for that individual to take the proper measures.

A.A. membership does not grant immunity from local regulations and being at an A.A. meeting does not put anyone beyond the jurisdiction of law enforcement officers. A.A. members are also “citizens of the world,” and as citizens we are not above the law. – GSO Service Material

Now let’s keep the focus on our Primary Purpose, as noted in our Big Book “Love and tolerance of others is our code”. By maintaining order and safety in meetings, the groups as a whole will benefit, and members will be able to focus on recovery from alcoholism and a life of sobriety.

Ask yourself, what am I doing to promote a safe place within the rooms of AA for the newcomer?
Your sober sister,
Shelly C.





Literature Spotlight



In tribute to Black History Month, the February, 2021, Spotlight on Literature selection for review is **A.A. for the Black and African-American Alcoholic**, P-51. This well-written pamphlet focuses on nine persons of color who share their experience, strength and hope as members of Alcoholics Anonymous. I have a special interest in **A.A. for the Black and African-American Alcoholic** as the story of a dear friend, Larry, is included in its pages.

There are a number of A.A. pamphlets addressed to specific groups of alcoholics who seek sobriety such as women, clergy, teenagers, Native Americans, and members of the Armed Forces, to name a few. While we strive to be inclusive, as the disease of alcoholism can affect every human being without distinction, Alcoholics Anonymous recognizes that some may have preconceived notions about membership requirements based on the history of

our foundation.

The sub-topic, **Do you have a drinking problem?** includes a particular set of reasons why people of color may look for solace in the bottle. “If you are having problems on the job, at home, with your family, or with your friends, it may be easier to look at society, at prejudice and racism, at little and big insults, at the attacks on your dignity, at experiences of rejection and exclusion, of feeling different, not good enough, not wanted, or not the right kind. Some of us feel like telling the rest of the world: “If you were like me, if you were in my situation, if you had my problems, you would drink too.” **Some history – blacks in A.A.** notes that in 1940, when Alcoholics Anonymous was five years old, Bill W. was approached by two black alcoholics whom he invited to attend meetings in the New York area. Before long, the predominantly white, male society of drunks was enriched by a wide diversity of fellow sufferers who found sobriety in the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous.

The stories of the four men and five women who are presented in **A.A. for the Black and African-American Alcoholic**, represent a wide range of experiences and viewpoints. The pamphlet notes, “If you think you have a drinking problem, and if you are of Black/African-American heritage, you may identify with some of the experiences shared in these stories.” The following condensed highlights will, hopefully, encourage you to pick up this pamphlet and delve deeply into their struggles and successes as they journeyed to achieve sobriety through participation in the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Gioya “I can go into any A.A. meeting, anywhere, and feel at home.”

Gioya, who was raised in a black neighborhood by teetotaling, nonsmoking churchgoers, began to drink in high school. “As a shy, serious kid, I didn’t fit in with the cool girls in my neighborhood. I was teased mercilessly about my awkward, skinny body. I was terrible at sports, afraid of boys, and couldn’t dance. I blamed my straight parents for my corniness, and that began a lifetime of blaming others for my actions.”

She found her way into A.A. after two failed marriages and many lost jobs. Although she started her A.A. journey at all black meetings where she lived, that picture changed when she moved to an integrated area. “When I walked into meetings there, I felt different at first, very ill at ease. I felt like I stood out because there was only me and at most one other black person. I knew, however, that I

needed A.A. What I found was that because I am an alcoholic, the members accepted me very warmly.”

Kirk “It was what did not happen in A.A. that surprised me most. I was not judged, nor was I made to feel different.”

Kirk was born in Harlem to hard working loving parents. “My childhood was controlled and protected. My brothers and I were instructed to do as we were told and we would be provided for. “ Kirk played sports throughout high school and took his first drink at 18. During college, he binge drank between sports commitments and became a New York City firefighter after he left. He married, had children, but hit a new low when he began to take drugs. Kirk got divorced, began a new relationship, got into serious financial and moral difficulties and hit bottom.

“ A friend who had come to A.A. about two years earlier told me to give A.A. a try. My first experience was not good. I walked into the meeting and it was all white and all white-collar workers. The speaker shared that he had been a high-powered executive. Oh boy, was I in the wrong place! My first impression left me wondering how all of these middle-class white people could know anything about hard times. They were all rich and, in my mind, the only thing they had lost was their house on the beach, or maybe they had to fire the maid! What did they know about being different? *I was different*, I thought, so back out the door I went.” But three months later, after a five day binge, he came back to the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous. “I think the most important A.A. concept that was passed on to me was that recovery is just one day at a time. “



Paula “I feel like I am simply a member of Alcoholics Anonymous — nothing more, nothing less.”

Paula felt that she never fit in at her predominantly white high school and neighborhood. Her mom never showed her that she loved her and she had no friends, so she left home at age 11. She “hooked up with rejects, living in a rat’s nest” for 16 years. Following a suicide attempt, she made her way into the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous. “All my fears of being black in A.A. were just that — my fears. Not one of them has come true, and I have been here for more than three years now. I discovered that not a single person treated me as if I was the group’s special project. What they did was show and give me the kind of love and support I had never known. I had been afraid that I wouldn’t be accepted. But it didn’t seem as if the color of my skin even mattered. Up to this very moment, I would never be able to tell that I am black in A.A. “

Sam “. . . it dawned on me, ‘I don’t have to drink.’ It was a powerful feeling!”

Sam, who grew up in the deep south during the Jim Crow era when segregation was alive and well, started drinking in his teens. “When I drank,” said Sam, “I forgot about all the mistreatments I had endured in the South and how much I wanted to get away from there. When I drank, all was forgiven.” After making the rounds of the doctors and hospitals, and trips to the psycho ward, Sam was told to check out Alcoholics Anonymous. “My big breakthrough came after I took the Fourth Step (“Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves”). I discovered that defects that I saw so readily in others were very prominent in my life. I found out that I’m no different than anyone else in the Fellowship. When I realized that, it gave me a new freedom.”

Ursula “I fell in love with the ‘we’ of the program. I listened to people sharing and was amazed at how alike we all are.”



Ursula who started to drink when very young grew up in a physically abusive household. She was taught to stuff her feelings and never reveal any vulnerabilities to anyone. The neighborhood she grew up in was predominantly black and she attended a predominantly black school. “My first daily interactions with people who were other than African-American was when I entered the workforce. I had assumed that we were different, but my fears were unfounded. I had no negative experiences.” She found Alcoholics Anonymous after her husband left, her daughter went to live with him, her job was in jeopardy and she had acute pancreatitis.

“Although I didn’t understand a lot of what was being said, I understood “Keep coming back.” In fact, I couldn’t remember anyone saying that to me before. I listened to people sharing and was amazed at how alike we all are. I immediately identified and felt right at home with people just like me. The white, black, gay, straight, old, and young members of A.A. were telling bits and pieces of my story. I heard them share about how they were no longer drinking one day at a time. “

Palmer “I am an unflinching advocate of a healing faith and of Alcoholics Anonymous.”

Palmer grew up in the sixties but maintained his religious beliefs and activism in the church. He earned fairly good grades, and played on high school sports teams. But he was also drawn to late-night street-corner gatherings with neighborhood friends for wine drinking and soul singing. Palmer drank liberally in college and left after a year. He was in and out of school for 13 years, graduated with a degree in English literature, had a son, and took care of his ailing mother but he never stopped drinking. After his mother died, he spiraled into drug addiction and landed in a homeless shelter where he was introduced to Alcoholics Anonymous.

“Although my initial perception suggested “middle-aged white males only need apply,” I was struck by an unbridled joy and sense of purpose shared by many of those A.A.s who came to speak to us.” He continued to struggle with his addictions for many years, but remembered hearing “keep coming back” and eventually, he returned to the rooms of A.A. “Participating in my A.A. group’s commitments to those same detoxes and halfway houses that took me in is indispensable to my recovery. I got sober in a mixed group of A.A. I was always welcomed by any group, but you get a special feeling when you know you’re really accepted, that people want you around. I learned that recovery from alcoholism is an inside job. “

Evelyn “. . . without my sobriety I have nothing. This is the kind of life I always dreamed about.”

Evelyn relates that she was “born into a large, chaotic black family in which everyone drank heavily. I can remember watching my aged grandmother drinking beer until she passed out after a long day of cleaning white people’s homes. “ Evelyn went to nursing school, but her drinking escalated and she drank nearly every day after work. At the age of 44 and in her third marriage which was failing, Evelyn was in a locked psychiatric unit, having been hospitalized for major depression and alcohol dependence. A.A. was part of the hospital recovery program.

“When I attended my first A.A. meeting, I had no idea what to expect. I was shocked to find so few black people. I was afraid I would not be accepted by such a large white population. I was afraid it was going to be like it was when I was in nursing school, where I had gotten a lot of flack from non-blacks and had not been accepted. I was surprised to find that the only requirement for membership was a desire to stop drinking. “

Charlotte “A.A. has made me a sober woman, a woman of integrity. . . a woman of values. . . .”

Charlotte picked up a drink to cover up the pain of loneliness and betrayal after her husband left. “Drinking seemed to be a panacea. No matter what was going on, I felt I was more effective when I drank. Following a second marriage to an abusive, violent man, her drinking quickly escalated. She had a third child, was having severe anxiety attacks and went to the doctor for some medication. On one occasion, her brother left a lot of liquor in the house and Charlotte invited her drinking buddy, B. whom she hadn’t seen for a few weeks, over for drinks. “When she came over I knew immediately something was different. She had some A.A. pamphlets with her and she said, “I just came over here to tell you I’m in Alcoholics Anonymous.” I told her, “You’re not white. How could you be in Alcoholics Anonymous?” I thought only white people went to A.A. She said, “You really don’t have to be white.”

Charlotte continued to drink for a few more years until she hit bottom. She thought about B. and called A.A. She was directed to a meeting nearby. “Little did I know that I had walked into the only black A.A. group in Philadelphia. This is my home group today. I now know that alcoholism is just not a white or black man’s disease. It affects all social backgrounds. A.A. is not a fellowship of the elite, of the upper class. You don’t have to have X number of dollars to belong.I feel that, with the support of A.A., I can accomplish anything that I aspire to do or to be. To me, A.A. is the greatest thing that could ever have happened to me.”

Larry “*Today my life is unbelievable.*”

Larry grew up in a working-class family who valued education. He had his first drink at age 15 with the guys on the corner. His drinking increased after high school when he enlisted in the Air Force for four years. Larry had a couple of experiences with racism in the military, including being overlooked for promotion. On his return, the GI bill sent Larry to a Catholic, all-white, all-male school in the largest black class that had ever been recruited to that college — maybe one percent of the student body. “We got very activist and we also did a lot of drinking. I was of age, so I appointed myself the designated State (liquor) Store runner for the other students.” After graduation, Larry got a job as an administrator in the same college. “I was the youngest person and the only black among the administrators and I felt less than. My drinking really took off then.” He went to Grad school, but drinking got in the way of attaining a degree. Over the years as his drinking increased, Larry’s marriage failed, he left or lost jobs and progressed to the D.T.s. Detox and rehab introduced him to Alcoholics Anonymous.

“Before I came to A.A., I didn’t think there were black alcoholics. I thought only winos, old white men, had the disease. I didn’t think black people had it. Most of the people in the rehab were not black. When I met other people like myself in A.A., I began to feel comfortable. My home group is a predominantly black group and I’ve always felt comfortable there. I can do pretty much anything I want as a result of being free from alcohol. A.A. has worked tremendously fine for me. “

A.A for the Black and African-American Alcoholic concludes with the topic, **How do I find A.A.?**

It suggests that you look up the phone number for Alcoholics Anonymous and call to ask for meeting locations. Types of meetings, open, closed and beginners are described. If there is no A.A. group nearby or for those who are physically unable to attend meetings, help is still available. You may write to Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163 or visit www.aa.org. That is the mailing address of the A.A. General Service Office. The A.A. members who work there will share their experience with you. And they will be glad to offer suggestions for getting an A.A. group started.

Love and support in service,

Sheila D.

The Other 24 Principles

/'prɪnsəpəl/
PRIN-CI-PLE
A rule or belief governing one's personal behavior.

In this article, we will discuss the A.A. Tradition and Concept of the month. The main hope is to help us all, myself included, grow in "Understanding and Effectiveness." As the writer of this article, I feel it necessary to clarify that I am by no means an expert in our Traditions and Concepts. All that I have to share is my own experience and the literature that has helped me. I eagerly suggest reading up and discussing anything with your sponsor that you

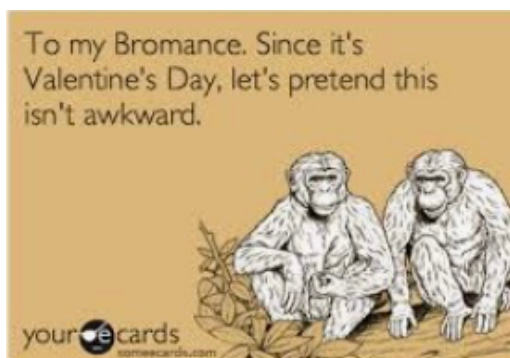
feel does not reconcile with our literature. I will do my utmost to make sure I note any A.A. Conference Approved Literature that I reference.

Tradition 2: "For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority- a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern."

As was mentioned in the article last month, Tradition 1 is a statement emphasizing the importance of Unity in A.A., while the remaining eleven traditions present us with sacrifices we can make to ensure the unity of our groups and A.A. as a whole. Tradition 2 is an excellent step in the right direction for that unity.

The first part of the tradition clarifies that there is one ultimate authority in A.A.: God as He expresses Himself through all of us. I know for myself, the way I typically hear direction from the God of my understanding is through other people. Before working the program of Alcoholics Anonymous, I was the person who lived by self-direction, always playing God in all of my affairs. "Forever trying to arrange the lights, the ballet, the scenery and the rest of the players in his own way," and the result....I ended up a homeless drunkard praying for death. This terrible blow deflated my ego, and I became open to seeking others for guidance and direction, which I found in the members of Alcoholics Anonymous. I found "Good Orderly Direction" in a "Group of Drunks," as we sometimes say.

Something happens when we all come together under one common purpose in A.A., something that is much bigger than any of us. How often have we sat in a heated homegroup business meeting debating back and forth over a matter to the point that it seems like we are on the brink of full-blown argument, only to reach some extremely simple and widely appreciated compromise seemingly out of nowhere? How does that happen? Both sides may have seemed set in their ways and ready to draw dividing lines with no willingness to give up any ground. However, what I have come to is that the matter being debated is overshadowed by something that both sides of the debate have - a love for their homegroup, a passion for A.A., and a desire to help the alcoholic who still suffers. When we come to A.A. and our homegroups with the desire to best be helpful in the forefront of our minds, I do believe that we give the God of our understanding a spiritual lease to use us and speak through us. He always will, so long as we are each willing to make some sacrifices.



I know for myself when I am willing to sacrifice my need to be the big shot or to try to "browbeat" people into getting my way in my homegroup, district, or intergroup, and I alternatively seek just to be "a small part of the great whole," I find myself much more connected or unified with those about me. Furthermore, when I am willing to sacrifice what I want and try to look for what is best for my homegroup and A.A. as a whole, usually the outcome is better than what I wanted in the first place anyway.

The second part of Tradition 2, which states, "Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern," further emphasizes who the authority is in A.A. and that it is not me. One of my favorite A.A. speakers once said, "A.A. doesn't work for me. I work for A.A." It is easy to get confused into thinking that there is some ladder that goes up or some A.A. hierarchy with leaders at the top and members at the bottom. Thankfully that could not be further from the truth.

Those in positions such as the Group Chairperson, GSR, DCM, Intergroup Chair, Delegates, and even Trustees are nothing more than A.A. servants. We trust them to serve A.A., and we trust them to put the greater good of A.A. as a whole ahead of everything in their decisions and actions. Now undoubtedly, there is a reason why they are voted into the leadership positions they are in, which usually and hopefully always is because of their experience with putting A.A. principles to practical application in their homegroups, local intergroup, area, etc., instead of popularity, or because "no one else would do it."

My sponsor always says, "We get the A.A. we deserve," so I still have to ask myself, first; are my actions and decisions that of a person seeking to serve A.A., and second; when I am voting people into positions of service in A.A., are these the people who I trust will show up and put the greater good of A.A. as a whole ahead of everything including their wants and their specific homegroup.

As stated in the Current Conference Charter:

"1. Purpose: The General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous is the guardian of world services and of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous. The Conference shall be a service body only; never a government for Alcoholics Anonymous."

Even though that statement applies to The General Service Conference, it is easily translated to the trusted servants at the top of our upside down triangle and into each of our homegroups. Like we always say, "I am Responsible."

Concept 2: "When, in 1955, the A.A. groups confirmed the permanent charter for their General Service Conference, they thereby delegated to the Conference complete authority for the active maintenance of our world services and thereby made the Conference- excepting for any change in the Twelve Traditions or



in Article 12 of the Conference Charter - the actual voice and the effective conscience for our whole society."

I remember being overwhelmed just trying to read Concept 2 when I first saw it in our literature. It looked like a mix of legal jargon and perhaps a touch of Greek, which I have no idea how to read. However, thanks to good sponsorship, workshops, and my own seeking to better understand, I realized that this concept was relatively straightforward.

A.A. is massive with many members in many groups, and much like I mentioned in Tradition 2, we want our voice heard, and we want the best for A.A. as a whole. Before 1955 we had our cofounders Bill W. and Dr. Bob to make decisions for the greater good of A.A. Dr. Bob's passing confronted Bill with his mortality; it became evident that the leadership would have to be transferred to the A.A. groups. So, in 1955 the A.A. groups took over ultimate authority and responsibility for our world services. In *The A.A. Service Manual*, it says:

"The power of the groups and members to alter their world service structure and to criticize its operation is virtually supreme. They have all of the final responsibility and authority that there is. The operation is really theirs; they really own it."

How are we to come together and make sure that all of our voices will be heard in a group conscience? How are we supposed to carry out the services necessary to ensure the perpetuation of the A.A. message? It is not feasible to get every A.A. member from every group together to have a group conscience or carry out the necessary work. That wouldn't even be possible to do in just one area, even one as small as Delaware. Jokingly, my sponsor says that trying to get many A.A. members for something like dinner after a meeting is like "trying to herd cats." Imagine trying to get every group member across all groups together to do something like a group conscience; it would be impossible.

So, because of that, A.A. groups have General Service Representatives (GSRs), and they go to an Area Assembly to represent their group. There is a total of 93 Areas spread throughout the United States and Canada, Delaware being Area 12 of those 93. Every two years at those Area Assemblies, those GSR's vote for a delegate to represent their particular Area. That delegate is then the trusted servant for the Area and the active voice of the groups in that Area. We trust them to vote and take

actions that prioritize the greater good of Alcoholics Anonymous at the General Service Conference, which is held for six days in April every year. These GSR's and delegates essentially become the conduit between the many scattered homegroups across the United States and Canada to the Trustees Delegates, Director Delegates, and the Executive and Staff Delegates of the A.A. General Service Board, A.A. World Services, and the A.A. Grapevine.



In there, you will notice the phrase "A.A. as a whole" and not just A.A. in our Area. While we as Area 12 Delaware members always want what is best for A.A. here, of course, we should also always consider that sometimes what is best for A.A. here in Delaware is not necessarily the best for A.A. as a whole. That being the case, it is always of absolute importance to vote wisely for our trusted

servants, being sure to vote for the person who will show up and is best qualified to serve A.A. as a whole, and not just because they are most popular or the first person to volunteer. While willingness is always great, in this case, the qualification must be paramount because the GSR you elect in your homegroup will vote for the next delegate. We want to be sure that it will be someone who will vote and take actions in the best interest of Alcoholics Anonymous.

It is essential to note the part of the concept that states, "excepting for any change in the Twelve Traditions or in Article 12 of the Conference Charter". This statement clarifies what the delegates and trustees cannot change at the General Service Conference: our Twelve Traditions, Article 12 of the Conference Charter, and the Twelve Steps and the Concepts. While these things can be changed, it would require more than just the delegates and trustees; it would require three-quarters of all the A.A. groups worldwide to write into A.A. to bring about changes within them. As Bill W. wrote in the Introduction to the *Twelve Concepts For World Service*:

"The future advocates of structural change need only make out a strong case for their recommendations- a case convincing to both the Trustees and to the Conference. This is no more than would be required for the transaction and passage of any piece of A.A. business. Save for an exception or two, it is noteworthy that the Conference Charter itself can be easily amended."

I hope I have done justice to what I always found to be a more difficult concept to understand. However, I know others may do a much better job explaining this than I can, so I always suggest seeking because nothing wrong has ever come from seeking to "*grow and understanding and effectiveness*."

Brendon M
Sobriety Date: 02/25/2011
Member at Large, NDIAA

Literature for reference: Alcoholics Anonymous (Big Book); A.A. Comes of Age; 12 Steps and 12 Traditions; The A.A. Service Manual 2018-2020 Edition; The Twelve Traditions Illustrated (P-43); The Twelve Concepts for World Service illustrated (P-8); The A.A. Group...Where it All Begins (P-16); A.A. Tradition, How it Developed (P-17); Concepts Checklist (SMF-91)





Into Service....

Name: Emmy K

Sobriety date: 4/13/12

Home Group: Sisters in Serenity

Service Position: 12 Step Call List Volunteer

Length of service commitment: As long as God sees fit

Sobriety requirement: 1 year of continuous sobriety

Service Position Responsibilities: 12-Step volunteers work hand-in-hand with Home Answering and Central Office. They do everything from talking to a practicing alcoholic about AA, taking someone to their first meeting or taking an out-of-town visitor to a meeting. Whereas Home Answering volunteers take the initial call and disburse it, 12-Step volunteers do the actual "leg work". When someone calls either the Home Answering or Central Office, the individual is asked for their first name, phone number and location. Then, the 12-Step list is consulted, and depending on whether it is a man or woman, the appropriate person in that area is contacted and given the information. The 12-Step volunteer then contacts that person.

How to sign up: There is a sign up form on the NDIAA website (www.NDIAA.org) and there are copies of the sign up form at the Central Office in Trolley Square. You can also email Jaime at the Central Office at mainoffice@ndiaa.org and include your name, the area you live in, your telephone number, sobriety date and what day or days you are available to do 12 step work and if you are available days or nights or both. The Central Office will contact you to give you all the information you will need once you sign up.

My Experience: I heard about the 12 step call list in a meeting years ago and I realized that I was a product of that list. I realized that it saved my life. When I felt enough pain, I called an old therapist of mine who I hadn't seen in years. She called intergroup who then called me. After talking to intergroup for a while, I hung up the phone and felt relieved. As soon as I hung up the phone, it rang again. I picked it up and a sweet voice came across the line. She introduced herself and said she was from A.A. We spoke for about an hour and then she offered to meet me for coffee. I was skeptical but decided to meet her at Dunkin' for a coffee and chat. She offered to take me to a meeting. Again, I was skeptical but God saw it fit that I go. I was very confused during the meeting but she explained everything afterwards. I still didn't understand why she would take the time to talk to me on the phone, let alone meet me for coffee and take me to a meeting when she had never even met me. She was quick to tell me that I was helping her more than she was helping me. She became my first sponsor and a good friend. So, when I heard intergroup needed help, I didn't hesitate to volunteer.

How has this service commitment changed/enhanced your personal sobriety? I didn't receive a call for a while but when I did, I was very excited. I spoke to a woman and met her at a meeting. We sat quietly next to each other and she cried. It reminded me of what early sobriety was like and that I never wanted to feel that way again. We talked after the meeting, I gave her my number and we parted ways. My first sponsor was right, this woman reminded me of something I had forgotten and needed to be reminded of. Another situation that stands out is about a very dedicated, strong woman that ended up being a close friend. She started attending my homegroup and did not have a license or anyone to help her get to meetings. I found out she was using the bus to get to our meeting so I offered her a ride. It became a regular thing. One day I didn't feel like going to a meeting and was on my way to the alcoholic, very dangerous, isolation. I received a call from intergroup asking me if I could give someone a ride to a meeting. Although I didn't want to, I did it anyway. To my surprise, it was the same woman. She said she wanted to give me a break from giving her rides. I explained to her how I was feeling and I needed to do it to stay sober. I don't know if I would've drank that day but I know I didn't because of the twelve step list. It got me to my first meeting that got me sober and it got me to another meeting that kept me sober!

How has AA Service changed/enhanced your personal sobriety? Simply put, service keeps me humble. It always reminds me of where I came from and that I don't want to go back. Most of all, it reminds me that I have to give it away to keep it and if I'm focused on you, I'm not focused on me.





Stone Cold Sober

We often hear that there is no graduation from Alcoholics Anonymous. There are no medals or diplomas given out, but that also brings up the issue of status.

I recently heard in a meeting that the highest level we can ever attain or strive for in A.A. is that of "servant." It was such a simple idea and I have been thinking about it since. No matter how long we are sober, or what quality of sobriety we have, our goal should be to serve, and more importantly, to serve humbly.

One of my sponsee's and I always remind each other that the only time we look down on another alcoholic is when we are reaching down to help them up. This usually is mentioned when we are discussing principles over personalities, but it is always a great reminder. We are all here to help and serve one another in fellowship. We are not on a ladder, some higher ranked than others, but rather we are in a circle that expands to welcome each newcomer and returning member.

The program also reminds us to be kind to the newcomer because that person may be our sponsor one day, and further reminded that we need to go to meetings because no newcomers walk past the couches in our homes. Are we gratefully humble toward everyone in the program and in our performance of service work, no matter how minimal or seemingly unimportant. Do I value the person who sets up the chairs every week as much as our GSR. Do I treat the DCM with the same gratitude as the person who comes out in the snow with the key to open the meeting on a holiday or the person who takes a crisis call from someone still out there during the Super Bowl. Are we equally respectful and valuing of the member who is not yet willing or able to do service work, when maybe all they can handle right now is not thinking, not drinking and going to a meeting. We are all servants in different ways, with different skills, and energy levels - but the program needs each of us to survive and thrive.

Our steps talk about humility, but even humility taken too far- like many positive traits - can become a character defect. The key, we are told, is to remain "right sized," not self deprecating and not so full of ourselves that we consider ourselves an expert or special entity within AA. We need to remember it is about our message, not the messenger. Years ago when I was speaking at an AA breakfast, someone reminded me, "If you do a good job, people do not walk out saying 'what a great speaker.' Rather, if you do a good job, people walk out saying 'what a great program!'"

From Yale to jail, park bench to Park Place, in a program where the bank robber sits next to the banker, are we constantly asking ourselves, 'how can I be of service to my fellows.' Alcoholics Anonymous and recovery are a marathon, not a sprint, a way of life, and not just something we dabble in during crisis, each of us a humble servant for the greater good.

As always, this is just one alcoholic's experience, strength, and hope. Take what you like and leave the rest.

I wish you faith and patience, the faith that it works and the patience to let it.

In fellowship, Maria

February 2021



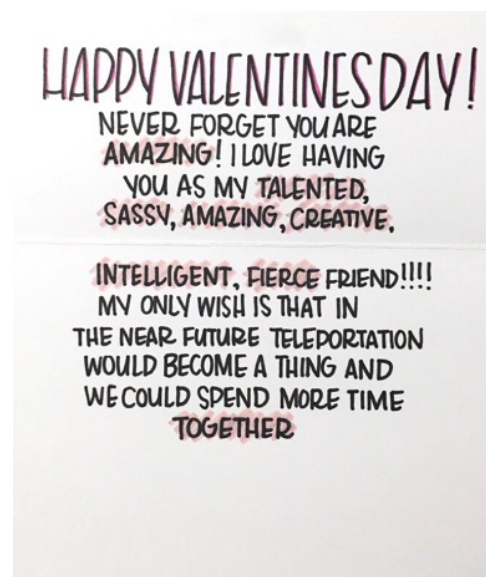
Through the Eyes of Newcomer

Hi everyone I would like to talk to you guys about Step 2 - "Came to believe that a Power greater than us could restore us to sanity."

In the beginning, this was a lot for me to swallow. I'd ask myself constantly "Do I really have a problem?" But, when I put the work in, didn't I get sober? I had already admitted that I was powerless over alcohol and my life is unmanageable. This was really hard for me. It took away a lot of the control that I try to exert on every aspect of my life. But at the same time that I was doing that, I would constantly feel as though I was spinning. It felt like in the next instant I was going to fall flat on my face. When I was told about Step 2, I always believed in God, however, somewhere along the way, doubt and fear had become my driving force. Every time I reached for a bottle or found myself digging around in my pocket for change, I still somehow thought I had everything together. When I read the 12 steps and I read them as a whole, I felt that I could accept all of it, however, when I broke down each step, I tried to rush thru it and I said okay God's in control. There's a plan for everything. What's the next step? But my sponsor told me I had to stop and breathe. She made me write down step 2 and look at it and read it. I came to believe that a Power greater than myself could restore me to sanity. When I look at that and break it down it means that I have to not only put my fears and doubts aside but I have to trust that my Higher Power was watching over me and guiding me. Even though I had tried a million different things to get sober it was now time to know that my Higher Power had the capability to guide me away from alcohol and to restore my life. By going to the meetings, meeting with my sponsor, and talking to other alcoholics who had clean time, I saw what made them happy joyous and free and I knew I wanted that. That night after my meeting I couldn't sleep, my thoughts were racing. Something told me that there was a change coming. Now it would be easy for me to resort to my old coping mechanisms - isolating, denying and numbing. But as soon as I had that thought, I felt it inside me. My Higher Power did have what I needed..a sober life. It was so humbling to hold on to that faith. It became a part of my day to do steps 1, 2 and 3 everyday. Everyday I accept that I am an alcoholic, that I am powerless and my life is unmanageable. When I don't drink everyday, I renew my belief that a Power greater than myself can restore me to sanity. Everyday I make a decision to turn my will and my life over to the care of God, as I understand him. These things do not bind me nor do they limit me. To be honest, they free me. Accepting my past, my decisions and the consequences is not easy. These things take work. Sometimes my demons tell me that I don't have to feel. I don't have to face the shame and guilt of my past. But thanks to my meetings and this program I no longer have to listen and believe my demons. I know my past has caused pain to those I care about and also caused me pain. It took a very long time for me to realize that when I used to say well, I'm drinking, I'm not hurting anyone. I was basically saying that hurting myself was okay cuz I wasn't anyone. But now, by accepting my Higher Power and working to swallow my ego and pride, I am humbled and when I am humbled I feel at peace. When I heard my sponsor talk at meetings he had

that peace that I wanted, that had been so hard for me to get, what I had been chasing all along. When I applied the 12 steps to my life daily and not just towards my alcoholism, it allowed me to look in the mirror and see my past, see my present and to finally look forward to a future. My goals and ambitions for today are no longer about materialistic things. I do take pride that my bills are paid and that I am no longer ignoring my debt though. I am reliable to those that count on me and I show up. All of these actions are not me, they are my Higher Power. They are the suggestions that are offered to me by those in this program. I get the greatest sense of awe when i meet a person that has 24 hours sober. I remember the struggle. But I also smile when I remember the sense of coming home, of finding my people. I was no longer alone. That sense of belonging has not left me and on February 13th WE got a year sober!!! My eyes have seen struggle and extreme isolation and fear and doubt. I have known a longing from deep inside me to feel apart of something bigger than myself. I am humbled and grateful for all of YOU. This newcomer is learning and applying ways and tools to the relationships in my life so that I can continue to put other's opinions and experiences to different aspects of my life. Through my Higher Power AA HAS SAVED MY LIFE. I will continue to be here when asked. Thank you for reading this. Thank you for allowing me to share my experience, strength and hope. I'll see you all next month!!

Love and Service
Danielle



New Meetings

During this difficult time, please see the Intergroup Website (www.ndiaa.org) for current Zoom meetings.

Newsletter Stuff Needed

If you would like to contribute to the Newsletter, please email Emmy K at NDINewsletter@gmail.com Here are a few examples of how you can contribute:

- ~ Feature articles
- ~ Sneak Peak into Service articles
- ~ New Column Ideas
- ~ Cartoons or Rule 62 submissions
- ~ Fellowship opportunities
- ~ Groups needing support
- ~ New Meetings
- ~ Topics you would like to see covered in the Stone Cold Sober or Literature Spotlight columns
- ~ Longtimer volunteers for interviews



Anniversary Club: We do it One day at a Time....

Bob A. 7/9/90
Bob M. 1/17/83
Brendan D. 5/3/09
Brenda A. 2/23/85
Carel B. 4/26/04
Carolyn W. 7/15/82 Christopher K. 1/03
David C. 2/1/94
David G. 7/6/99
David F. 11/23/07
David K. 12/03/72 45 yrs.
Debbie H. 03/16/91
Doris S. 04/80
Doug W. 2/28/91
Ed H. 01/28/96
Franny C. 05/07/96
Fred M. 5/5/90
Gail R. 06/04/92
Jaime B. 08/08/04
Jaffrey H. 11/24/96
Janice S. 12/25/2010
Jason B. 4/20/09
Jim S. 04/10/88
Kara G. 11/8/12
Kathy O. 6/11/97
Ken H. 11/4/97
Ken P. 09/20/83

Kerry O. 04/20/08
Laura R. 6/21/95
Leslie D. 2/20/1990
Liza F. 1/20/05
Marilyn M. 6/26/99
Marie R. 9/6/83
Mary Ellen S. 1/24/10
Melissa S. 06/23/08
Mike M. 4/20/91
Nancy V. 2/21/05(Deceased)
Patricia K. 12/17/87
Patsy M. 1/6/88
Phyllis M. 03/09/88
Sally C. 10/15/95
Shirley U. 3/19/76 41 yrs.
Stanley B. 03/05/79
Suzanne M. 04/04
Tenney W. 5/15/82
Tom H. 07/02/04
Tom McD. 01/16/96
Tracy D. 2/28/2013
Valerie S. 2/3/89
Walt A. 01/94
Wes J. 4/21/75 42 yrs.
Wes M. 2/1/94

ATTENTION FAMILY!!!!!!

Would you like to celebrate your anniversary, show your fellows how the program works (one day at a time) and contribute to your Northern Delaware Intergroup at the same time? The Anniversary Club is easy to join. Here's how it works....you can email the information below to Jamie at mainoffice@ndiaa.org or fill out the form and mail it to 21B Trolley Square, Wilmington DE 19806.. A small donation of \$1 per year sober is all it costs to have your name and anniversary date printed in the Newsletter every month for a whole year:

Anniversary Club Contribution Card	
Sobriety Date	_____
Home Group	_____
Name	_____
Contribution	_____

BE POSITIVE

**Love is just
a word until
someone comes
along and gives it
meaning**

PAULO COELHO

