



The Ninth Step

“Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.”

The Ninth Tradition

“AA as such, out never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.”

Ed Note: AA’s in Service

Last month I started the issue with service in mind. Since that edition was put to the printer, I have received many more articles from our fellowship sharing their experiences in service. I would love to share these with you, and continue to offer ways to help coax some of you into service.

It has come to my attention again, that time after time, no matter how much I try, those closest to me do not understand what I am going through nor what I am a part of. The understanding we share of our disease, of each other, and of the struggles and also the good times we experience separately and together bind us as closely as any family.

In my world, family helps family. It’s a natural consequence of spending so much time together!! Whether you agree with me or not, think on this:

We are the fellowship and the fellowship needs ‘we’.

In service, Judy

South Jersey AA Contact information

AA information: toll free 856-920-1212

AA office: 856-486-4446

Newsletter: newsletter@asj.org

Website: www.asj.org

“When anyone anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA to be there. For that I am responsible.”

"Is' A Wonderful Life"

The life I had led was pure hell and was definitely my "horror story". I'm not gonna bore people with drawn out drunk-alogues, or war stories. We've all heard them!

I drank hard, played hard and worked... well, that's another story!! Drank for too many years, saw insides of jails, prisons and experienced death on two occasions. Did I have enough??? I've been in so many institutions, I honesty cannot recall them all. I tried AA for years, but I wasn't ready or done drinking yet. In 2007 another locked unit, but this time was different. I've had enough!!!! I lied to so many doctors about my drinking over the years and this time was no different.

Upon my discharge my papers said "GO TO AA with 6-7 exclamation points after. It is said "God speaks through people and I got the message. Under the lash of alcoholism I was literally driven to AA. I felt helpless, hopeless, useless and worthless. But that changed! I was greeted and received well and kept coming back. You folk told me too. I did!

I sat and I listened as only the dying can and it was well worth it. I heard hope. I got honest and prayed for willingness. I accepted this disease and surrendered to win. The war was over!!! I found a Higher Power whom I abandoned not the other way around. I jumped in with both feet. I found a Sponsor, Home Group and got into service. I now have been sober 3yrs 7 months. The best time i have ever lived. Sobriety is the most important thing in my life! For the program of AA, the fellowship and especially the God of my understanding I'll keep coming back!!!

For the staff who wrote "GO TO AA" and for the God who led me there, I will be eternally grateful.

God bless all of You!

Bill P.

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There But For The Grace of God Go I

There but for the grace of God go I. What I thought was yet another stupid AA slogan proved an important life lesson to the mind of a changed perception. In my experience, the only difference in taking a commitment and receiving a commitment was the decision of the judge on my court date. Today I know that if I had gotten what I deserved, I would have ended up in the jail I was taking AA meetings to, but for the grace of God, I was given another chance.

Early in my sobriety, I connected with a wonderful woman who has long-term sobriety and is very involved with the women's jail commitment. She invited me to go along with her one night and the rest is history. I loved this commitment from the first time I went. It was a reminder to me of where I should have been sent and where I would go if I ever drank again. These were some of the best meetings I ever attended because the women were so honest once they got to know me. I always left these meetings filled with gratitude because I was able to walk out the doors, I had my freedom, and nothing in my life seemed so bad in comparison. I did this commitment for 1 1/2 years and had to quit a year ago because of a conflicting schedule. I miss it terribly and hope to get involved again if my schedule permits.

A while back I was speaking at a meeting I had never attended before and a couple of the women shared that they had heard me speak before. I wondered to myself where they had heard me speak before. We talked after the meeting and I discovered they had been in jail when I had brought meetings there. Today those women are a part of my sober network. We went to an anniversary meeting together, we talk on the phone and we see each other often because we all make a regular attendance at meetings. Today I have awareness that what began as a completely selfish act intended only to keep me sober is also an opportunity to help someone else get or stay sober. And I know this because I take H&I commitments.

Suzanne B.

In Love and Service:

Taking the Message to DUI classes!

My name is Stu, I am an alcoholic; sober today by the grace of God, as I understand him, and the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. I did not wake up one day and decide to be an alcoholic. Nor do I remember my first drink, yet alone the date. My best thinking convinced me to drive drunk; only if I drank I could drive safely without the jitters and shakes. In order to maintain my sobriety, today, I speak at local DUI Offender classes for the Public Information Committee, as often as possible. Why you may ask? Because I am responsible for keeping the message of AA "out there." I also want to stay sober and by doing service, I am given the gift of another sober day. I share my experience with the police and the person who's car I damaged. I shared that as soon as I returned home after being arrested, that I drank, for that is what we alcoholics do under any and all circumstances. I am not proud of what I did, but I have been able to accept it and the consequences and move forward. I have been able to do this as a result of help from the fellowship of AA and my higher power. Today, I place my sobriety above everything else I do. For without it, I have nothing and am nothing. AA and a God of my understanding have given me a wonderful gift and I have a life beyond imagining. I wish to keep that gift. By performing service, and keeping the lamp of AA lit for all to see, I am given a sober day, what an amazing gift.

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Service by Writing

I would be interested in writing a Newsletter article on the gift of sobriety. Do I work the program perfectly, or imperfectly? I do use the tools of the program to live a life I am pleased with and would like to share it with others in an article the best way I can. As far as commitments, early in sobriety I was involved in many and was extremely active in the program. The program gave me the life that I have today, I would like to let others know the benefits of the program and the disadvantages if you don't give back. I would love to be apart of something that would be helpful, in a way I feel very comfortable and that is writing. Hope to hear from you. Thank you, Christine McM

Just Say YES!

How often have we heard someone, who has been asked to lead a meeting at the last minute, say, "You can't say No in AA.?" That's not really true is it? Many announcements are read at meetings about AA's needed for some types of service and if we aren't saying Yes; we are quietly saying No! It's true that not every AA can do every type of service job, but there is some type of service job for everyone. The trick is to be willing to find it! If talking is your thing, Public Information has a spot just for you. So too, do H&I, Bookers and especially the phones. Behind the scenes, Literature, Meeting List and Newsletter are right up your alley. Of course these are all Intergroup service jobs, but right in your Group or the other Groups that you visit; *you can give yourself* a service task. If no one is greeting folks as they arrive, Take the job! Experience has shown that a new person being welcomed like this is more comfortable and thus more apt to stay. Get there early and jump in on the set up, stay a little and help with the clean up. Sounds like work, but the pay is great. Just Say YES! Maybe not out loud, but definitely to yourself and maybe God.

Joe T How Important Is It Group, Washington Twp

Volunteers of America Facility Comments

It is a beautiful facility, and I didn't realize it was brand new. The people were very nice, and seemed appreciative to have a meeting brought to them.

Anonymous

Kintok Halfway House

If anyone is interested in bringing a meeting into the men Kintok Halfway House, please contact the H&I Chair, Priscilla. A man or woman can host this meeting. There will be a staff member in the room. An application is needed to be submitted. ***Currently there are no meetings at the halfway house whatsoever.*** *I have submitted an application and I am waiting to hear back, however I would like to see if anyone else is interested in going in. Please let me know.*

A message from H&I Chair, Priscilla S.

Our Twelfth Step- carrying the message- is the basic service that the A.A. Fellowship gives; this is our principal aim and the main reason for our existence. Therefore, AA is more than a set of principles; it is a society of alcoholics in action. We must carry the message, else we ourselves can wither and those who haven't been given the truth may die. (AA Service Manual, P S1).

I love to carry the message into rehabilitation centers and jails. I remember the first time I spoke at the Salem County Woman's Jail. I was so nervous when I got there. I didn't know what to say because I only had about 90 days or more. I asked the host what should I share about and she said, "Your experience, strength and hope". So, I shared about the type of household I grew up in and the different types of abuse that I endured. I explained that didn't make me an alcoholic, however I drank to cover up all of my childhood feelings. I didn't have a "drinking problem". If that was the case, I would have put down the drink and everything would have been great. I have alcoholism. Ism- I, Self and Me is the problem. When I left that jail, I cried because I felt like I let so much weight off of my shoulders, similar to doing a Fourth Step. I was able to share with the women in their, things I wasn't capable of sharing in a regular meeting, yet.

When I go to rehabilitation centers, I feel the same way. I gain a great sense of relief and a little more weight off my shoulders. Not only am I carrying the message to the next suffering alcoholic, but somehow I get that "pink cloud" for a day or so that we got when we were a newcomer.

Ham On Wry

A MAN WALKS INTO A BAR CARRYING AN ALLIGATOR and a chicken. He sets them down on a stool next to him and says to the bartender, "I'll have a Scotch and soda." Then the alligator says, "I'll have a bourbon on the rocks."

The bartender says, "That's incredible! I've never seen an alligator that could talk!"

The man says, "He can't. The chicken is a ventriloquist."

Mick K

Fellowship Announcements & Things To Do

Saturday, Sept 18 - Area 45 Inventory. 9:00 AM - Noon. Divine Word Seminary, Park Street, Bordentown.

Saturday, Sept 18 - CAIG Young at Heart Weekend in the Woods. Bass River State Park, 762 Stage Rd., Tuckerton, NJ. Contact Melissa S: 609-553-8743 or Heather Ann S: 609-972-5017. \$5/pp

Sunday, Sept 19 - 3rd Annual Race for Recovery. 5K Race & Fun Walk, USATF certified event. 9:00 AM. Cooper River Park, North Park Drive, Pennsauken, NJ. Details & registration form contact: Tammy Hammer: thammer@maryvillenj.org or 856-466-9768 - Jennifer Osmun: josmun@maryvillenj.org or 856-629-0244 ext. 323

Monday, Sept 20 - Blackwood Women's Step 21st Anniversary. United Methodist Church, 35 E. Church St., Blackwood, NJ. Food: 7:00 PM, Speaker: 7:30 PM. All Welcome.

Tuesday, Sept 21 - Medford Women's Spiritual Growth Group will celebrate their anniversary with food & fellowship: 6:30 PM, Speaker: 7:00 PM. Medford Friend's Meeting House, 14 Union St. Medford, NJ. All women are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Sept 24 - 26 - Camping Trip at Goshen Pond, Shamong, NJ sponsored by SJIG Social Committee. \$5.00/pp, Kids free. Free Dinner, Saturday at 6:00 PM. Campfire meeting at 8:00 PM. Contact Larry B: 856-373-8636 or Brian C: 609-280-6298 for information

Saturday, Sept 25 - 11am-4pm- Maryville's 61st Founders Day Picnic. ALL WELCOME!

1903 Grant Ave., Williamstown 856-629-0244. Speakers, Bubba Mac Band, 50/50, Pulled Pork, Hot Dogs, Hamburgers, Chicken, Games & Motorcycle "Recovery Poker Run" Pre-register: Bill Flietstra 856-863-3913 Ext .18 <http://www.maryvillenj.org/upcoming.htm>

Saturday, Sept 25 - Morning Glory Anniversary. Ashland Presbyterian Church, 33 E. Evesham, Voorhees, NJ. 9:00 AM: Food. Speaker after.

Saturday, Sept 25 - Riverton Triboro Anniversary. Sacred Heart Church Hall basement, 4th & Linden Sts. 7:00 PM: Food with speaker afterward.

Saturday, Sept 25 - Pro - Act Recovery Walks. Penn's Landing, Philadelphia, PA Celebrating Freedom from Addiction. Registration starts 7:00 AM, Opening Ceremony: 8:30 AM, Walk begins 9:00 AM. www.RecoveryWalks.org

Saturday, Sept 25 - A Workshop on Resentments presented by Districts 13 and 14. 1:30 PM - 3:30 PM, 2nd and Pine Sts., Millville.

Sunday, Sept 26 - Annual Cape Atlantic IG Unity Breakfast at the Beach. Grand Hotel, 1045 Beach Ave, Cape May, NJ. \$23.00/pp. Speaker: Rich B from Ocean City, MD. More information: Unity Chr. Cris K.: 609-816-4907, Tony M.: 609-555-5555, www.caigrp.org, http://www.caigrp.org/unity_bfast10.pdf

Sunday, Sept 26 - 400 Club Golf Fundraiser. 1:00 PM. Valley Brook, Blackwood, NJ.

Contact: Chris H. 856-981-1981 or chris.hammerquist@roche.com

Wednesday, Sept 29 - John Barleycorn Must Die 14th Group Anniversary. Speaker and Refreshments at 7:00 PM, Orthodox Presbyterian Church, 37 Coles Ave, Cherry Hill

Friday, Oct 1 - GSO Bus Trip to NYC "Travel the Road to Happy Destiny". A fund-raiser sponsored by CAIG Round Committee to provide scholarships for the November round-up. \$25.00 p/p. Leaving from the rear side of the Shore Mall @ 7:30 AM. Info call Jean @ 609-418-9887 or Laurie @ 609-837-2359.

Saturday, Oct 2 - The Weekend Special Meeting invites you to our 8th year Celebration. Bethesda United Methodist Church, Swedesboro, NJ. Speaker at 9:30 AM. Food and fellowship follows. Meeting will be held in the Fellowship Hall. All Welcome

Anniversaries this month:

Tri Boro, Riverton, 9/25 7:30 pm

Morning Glory 9/25 9:00 am breakfast

Haines[prt 9/27 7:00 pm

Ninth Step Willingness

During my early days of attending Alcoholics Anonymous, I heard others talk of the rewards of sobriety through the daily practice of willingness. Specifically, the willingness to believe that by not drinking just one day at a time, they stayed sober and lived useful and contented lives. I told my sponsor that I wanted these rewards and set off to clean the house!

In my race to make amends to those I had harmed, I neglected to follow my sponsor's suggestion: keep the focus on my behavior and do not expect a pat on the back after making an amend. She also recommended that I pray for the willingness to become willing. My interpretation of her suggestion was that I be willing to think of myself, make an apology and accept the big handshake from those I had harmed. My expectations and my self-centeredness imprisoned me, particularly since I thought I had “prayed to become willing.”

I could not comprehend the meaning of serenity being contingent on my spiritual condition until I became willing to commit to the agreement that I “go to any lengths for victory over alcohol.” That's one of the lines from the Big Book that I must have skipped. As in my stupor of active alcoholism, I wanted to reap the rewards of this thing called sobriety by making certain amends on my own terms. My terms meant, “do the least amount of work for the maximum self benefit.” I couldn't wait to experience the promises and tell my sponsor about the elaborate apologies I had made, all in one day!! And how wonderful I would feel when my list was complete and I could share about my huge success at meetings. Those terms kept me drunk.

The key of willingness is threaded throughout the program's suggestions for a peaceful and contented life. For me, I knew no victory over the obsession of this disease while adjusting the Steps of this program to suit my fear-driven needs. Was this key of willingness within my reach? Sure, if only I surrendered and prayed to become willing to change, not on my terms but on God's terms.

I also had to become willing to do the footwork of making amends and to leave the results to God, my Creator.

May I be reminded that I will receive the gifts of sobriety when I become willing to follow suggestions, reach out to others, and express gratitude in my daily actions.

Linda B.