

ANONYMOUS SOUTHJERSEY

SOUTH JERSEY INTERGROUP

MARCH 2015

Acceptance is the Key

By Pat P.

I have joined another--actually two--12 Step programs in order to deal with my neurotic, compulsive need to control. I have discovered I have almost as much of an obsession to control, as I did to drink. Fortunately, because of AA, I have also discovered I laid the foundation in AA to deal with this obsession.

That foundation came from--and continues to come from, for I read it almost daily--the story "Doctor, Alcoholic, Addict" in the third edition of the Big Book. It's called "Acceptance Was the Answer" in the fourth edition; however, I have long referenced this story as the "chapter in the Big Book on acceptance" because that's how it was explained/given to me.

In this story, the doctor writing it explains how, and I quote, "...acceptance

(Continued on page 6)



Turning It Over

Step 3: Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

March is the third month: time to think about Step Three. We make a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understand him.

My sponsor taught me early on that Step Three does not mean giving your will up. It means entrusting your will to a higher power for guidance in its proper, wise and appropriate use and allowing your higher power the opportunity to give you the tools for the proper exercise of your will. This is indeed an important step for, according to the Twelve and Twelve, "...the effectiveness of the whole A.A. program will rest upon how well and earnestly we have tried to come to 'a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.'"

One technique that has helped me enormously in practicing Step Three has been the making and the using of a 'God Box.' A 'God Box' is a box with just one small 'sliver' of an opening (large enough perhaps, to slip in a piece of paper or a note) and no way to remove the paper once you put it in. You can go high-end and purchase one at a twelve-step store or, for the budget conscious, you can do what I did: get a shoebox and wrap it in layers of duct tape; leaving of course, an opening at the top to put your notes in.

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Grapevine Exclusive

A Sponsor's View

When Jay removed his glasses, the Big Book came alive

Didn't know how lucky I was when I finally asked this guy to be my sponsor. God sure helped me out on that day. I did not ask him because he was a man living with spiritual principles. I actually asked him because he wore black high-top sneakers like I did. Thanks to God's grace, Jay and I became sponsor and sponsee.

He said that he would like to meet weekly at his house and start taking the Steps out of the Big Book. That was something I had never done before. I also had never stayed sober before. I finally saw the connection. Our journey started. The first time that we sat at his kitchen table, I was both nervous and excited. Despite being desperate and willing, I still had some smugness about me.

When he asked me to draw a circle and a triangle inside it, I remember thinking to myself that I hadn't come for art lessons. I kept that thought to myself. I was amazed to learn about our Three Legacies of Recovery, Unity and Service. It was clear why I had relapsed so many times. My journey into real sobriety started on that day. And on we went.

As we started reading and talking, a new world opened up to

me. Jay would read, and I would listen. We actually read the pref-



ace and all the forewords and the pages with Roman numerals. I would've skipped over them if I'd been running this show. Luckily I wasn't.

Jay would pull his chair close to the table, put his glasses on and start reading. The words seemed to leap off the pages. I had never heard them before in my four years of being in and out of AA. I listened as he read, and so many things seemed to make sense. I was enjoying our weekly meetings and came to look forward to them.

As we continued meeting, it finally dawned on me what was happening: After reading for a while, he would stop, lean back, slowly remove his glasses, and, after taking a deep breath, he'd start to tell me his own experiences with the

words we had just read. He showed me how important it is to connect our experiences with the words in the book. With his glasses off, I learned so much more.

I realized that both glasses on and glasses off were needed to truly take these Steps. I started to look forward to what we were going to read next. When I saw that we were going to read

the part that says, "self-centeredness is the root of our troubles," I just knew we were in for a good session with the glasses off. Every time the book closed and the glasses came off, I just smiled and listened. I found myself in the pages of the Big Book, and I found the Big Book in the story of my life.

Today, I'm fortunate to have 14 years of sobriety and to be able to have several men come sit at my kitchen table as we take this beautiful journey together—with glasses on and glasses off.

Luke H., Allendale, N.J.

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Tradition Three and Concept III: The Decision Is Ours

The key word for March is "decision." In Step Three, we made a 'decision' to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God. Tradition Three involves two types of decisions: the decision of the A.A. group to keep someone out, and the decision of the A.A. member to stay in.

Tradition Three was fashioned out of early A.A. experience with the desire of some members to exclude certain persons from A.A. membership. Fears early on, were strong; that some members would dilute the primary purpose of the group and splinter the energies of the group into problems that had nothing to do with alcohol. Then, where would that leave "the real" alcoholics?

Fortunately, the early A.A.'s were able to see through the fears and come to the realization that *all* problem drinkers had a

right to A.A. membership *regardless* of who or what they were or of whatever other problems they might be struggling with in their lives. The *decision* was made to take the membership *decision* out of the hands of the group and place it into the hands of each member or would-be member. Thus, you are a member if you say so and if you have a desire to stop drinking. That's all; nothing more.

Concept III (of the Twelve Concepts for World Service) reiterates the theme of decision. Concept III states that each A.A. member, group, committee and service person (paid or unpaid) shall be accorded an independent "Right of Decision." The Concept makes it clear that, although an A.A. group or service committee may have elected or chosen a particular A.A. to represent their interests at service conferences or the General

Service Conference or Board, that A.A. is not *bound* in any way to vote as he may have been swayed or instructed to vote by the group he or she represents. He or she is absolutely free to vote or speak as his or her own conscious dictates at the time. He or she reserves the "Right of Decision."

I leave you with the last paragraph of Concept III as written: "Our entire A.A. program rests squarely upon the principle of mutual trust. We trust God, we trust A.A., and we trust each other. Therefore we cannot do less than trust our leaders in service. The "Right of Decision" that we offer them is not only the practical means by which they may act and lead effectively, but it is also the symbol of our implicit confidence."

Your Editor

From Books for Children (and *grown-ups too!*)

*Words of inspiration for when we're feeling low
or just need a reminder that the miracle is yet to come.*

44

***If you cannot be satisfied
with what you have, you
must learn to be satisfied
with what you haven't.***

--Further Tales of Mr. Pengachoosa,

***Nothing is al-
ways.***

*--The Girl Who
Loved the Wind ,
Jane Yolen, 1972*

***The world is full of
happiness, and plenty
to go round, if you
are only willing to
take the kind that
comes your way. The
whole secret is in be-
ing pliable.***

*--Daddy-Long-Legs,
Jean Webster, 1912*

Step 3

(From page 1)

The rule is that, once you jot down on a slip of paper something that you can't handle on your own and want to turn it over and let your higher power handle it, you place it in the God Box and make a decision to thereafter, let it go! No going back and taking stuff out—it stays where you put it: in God's hands.

To get down to actual practice, here are some of the things that I've placed in my God Box over the last year or so: mass catastrophes and killings, great prose writers who make me jealous, friends who haven't called me for years, A.A.s who make me angry when they share at meetings, administrators of large institutions, the disappearance of books in our culture, the money I've had and squandered, teachers I've



The rule is that....you place it in the God Box and make decision to thereafter let it go!

had, government shutdowns, jealousy over a colleague at work, my sponsor when he's not readily available, the manipulation of billions of dollars in the global economy, every member of my immediate family, tests I've had to take, things that Inter-group does, decisions I have to make regarding my

future, my lack of savings for my retirement, the fact that I don't live in a more "glamorous" place; etc. and etc.

One of the immediate benefits of using a God Box, is that I can stop being victimized by the remorse and guilt, the bitterness and the brooding that comes from taking problems upon my own shoulders. I cannot handle these problems, I need help; so I decide to take action and get help. Step

Three plainly tells us that it calls for "affirmative action." The God Box is just that: "affirmative action." Try it and see!

Masonville Marty

"There is No Middle-of-the-Road Solution"

**Area 45 Southern New Jersey 51st Annual General Service Convention
March 20, 21st, and 22nd, 2015**

- ***Saturday Night Banquet/DJ and Karaoke on Friday and Saturday nights***
- ***Stay the Weekend! Rooms for as little as \$32 per person (Pre-Registration ends March 3rd so book early to guarantee these rates)***
- ***Fellowship, Speaker Meetings, Marathon Meetings, Workshops and Old-timers Meeting. Al-Anon Program.***

Details: Visit snjaaconvention.org. The Crowne Plaza Hotel—2349 Marlton Pike (Rt 70), Cherry Hill, NJ 08002

Convention Chair—Debby S. Chair@snjaaconvention.org 856-404-5351

Registration Chair—Kelly W. area45conventionreg@gmail.com 609-817-4691

Editorial Policy

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Contributions from readers are encouraged—you can write about your experience, strength and hope in general, or you can focus on one of the steps or traditions. You can also write about something that touched you at a meeting, something that bothered you at a meeting, or some service commitment you especially enjoy. Submissions are edited for space and clarity. Contact information is required and anonymity is respected.

Due to space limitations, we are unable to publish flyers for events in this newsletter. However, we are happy to include your gathering in the general list of fellowship announcements.

Please send your submissions to newsletter@aasj.org.

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR SJ INTERGROUP:

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PO Box 2514
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Toll Free Hotline: 1-866-920-1212

SJIG holds its monthly meetings on the third Wednesday of the month at 8 pm at St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church 1989 Route 70 East, Cherry Hill, NJ

"It Takes Two"

"It Takes Two" is my proposal for a slogan to guide A.A.'s Seventh Tradition into the 21st Century. "It Takes Two" is my way of getting the message across at meetings everywhere that a single dollar just doesn't cut it anymore. A 1935 dollar surely only buys what 50 cents or less, buys today. A.A.'s expenses—your local group, intergroup, and the General Service Office—have risen and are rising, just like the cost of all other goods and services.

Carrying the A.A. message—by phone, literature, institutional commitments, newsletter, and public information and outreach—is at the very heart of staying sober for all of us. As recovering people, we all have a responsibility to support A.A.'s primary purpose and mission.

"It Takes Two" means, throw in two dollars instead of one. "Two" equals "one" in today's economy. From now on, it takes "two" to keep us going. It took two to keep Bill W. sober on that fateful day in Akron, Ohio in 1935 and it takes two today.

"It Takes Two" is my proposal for a new A.A. slogan. What's yours? Let's hear from you.

Your Editor

How Intergroup "Carries the Message"

There's been a lot of talk recently about 7th Tradition monies falling off somewhat. It's helpful to know that a portion of what each A.A. Group collects normally, and depending on group conscience, goes to support the South Jersey Intergroup. Intergroup supports A.A.'s primary purpose (to carry the message to alcoholics who still suffer from this disease).

Here are some of the ways Intergroup carries out its service:

- Website for easy access to events and meetings
- Easy access to literature
- Meeting lists
- Answering service
- Bookers
- Hospitals and institutions to carry the message into jails, prisons and other institutions
- Public Information and outreach
- Monthly Newsletter
- Social events to show we can have fun and stay sober

These services would not be possible without Intergroup and support from all South Jersey AA groups. Thanks to everyone for being a part of these efforts.

Information for this Article provided by Dave P.

Acceptance

(From page 1)

is the answer to ALL my problems today. When I am disturbed, it is because I find some person, place, thing, or situation--some fact of my life --unacceptable to me, and I can find no serenity until I accept that

*"...every time we are disturbed,
no matter what the cause, there
is something wrong with us."*

person, place, thing, or situation as being exactly the way it is supposed to be at this moment. Nothing, absolutely nothing happens in God's world by mistake. Until I could accept my alcoholism, I could not stay sober; unless I accept life completely on life's terms, I cannot be happy. I need to concentrate not so much on what needs to be changed in the world as on what needs to be changed in me and in my attitudes." (p. 449, third edition)

What a glorious piece of wisdom, truth, enlightenment! Whatever you want to call it, this is the Real Stuff. This is the Big Stuff. This is one human being learning about and applying the Serenity Prayer.

There are no mistakes in God's world. It's all about learning about ourselves and changing

ourselves. As it says on p. 90 of the 12 X 12, "It is a spiritual axiom that every time we are disturbed, no matter what the cause, there is something wrong with us." ("With us" is in the squiggly letters, as my good friend JQ says.) I have taken to paraphrasing the last part to "....and the problem

lies in me,
and God
and I can
fix it."

It was so
hard for
me to
learn--and
accept--

that word "always". Occasionally? Sure. Frequently? Maybe. But always? Ugh! So hard to accept that EVERY time I was disturbed, the problem lay in me. But over the years of staying sober and working the program, I did finally come to realize it was always. And reading the chapter on acceptance has given me the antidote. It's my prescription for happiness--or peace--or serenity. I can't change you. I can only change me. And when I do, I ALWAYS feel better, better about myself, better about you. As the good doctor says at the end of his story on p. 452: "I must keep my magic magnifying mind on my acceptance and off my expectations, for my serenity is directly proportional to my level of acceptance. When I remember this, I can see I've never had it so good. Thank God for A.A.!"

A.A. International Convention – 2015

July will be here before you know it and the countdown is on for the giant celebration in Atlanta in honor of A.A.'s 80th Birthday.

For those of you who have been sleeping, A.A. will convene its 14th International Convention from July 2-5, 2015 in Atlanta, Georgia. The theme will be "80 years—Happy, Joyous and Free." Some 4000 A.A. volunteers will host tens of thousands of A.A. visitors from over 90 countries.



Here's your chance to attend an A.A. meeting that's 50,000 strong and meet A.A.'s from all over the world. There'll also be lots of parties, fun and great food. Atlanta itself offers a variety of cultural and tourism sites.

If you haven't already, make plans to attend. Low cost housing and dining will be available at nearby colleges and thousands of volunteers stand ready to assist you for whatever special needs you might have. To find out more, go to www.aa.org.

NERAASA

Northeast Regional AA Service Assembly

NERAASA 2015 **Hosted by Area 44 (N. NJ)** **February 20 - 22, 2015** **Doubletree Hotel, Somerset, NJ** **For registration details, go to www.neraasa.org**

What is the purpose of NERAASA?

The purpose of NERAASA is for General Service Representatives (GSR's), District Committee Members (DCM's), Area Officers, Area Committee Members, District Committee Members, and Intergroup/Central Office Representatives of the Northeast Region to discuss General Service Conference related issues and concerns affecting A.A. as a whole, as well as pertinent aspects of recovery, unity and service common to the areas of the Northeast Region.

What happens at NERAASA?

NERAASA is a weekend of Panel Presentations and Floor Discussions on Issues Affecting A.A. Today; the Northeast Regional Trustee's Report; Saturday Dinner followed by an A.A. Speaker Meeting.

In addition, there are several Round Table Sharing Sessions throughout the weekend. They include (but are not limited to); General Service Representatives (GSR's), District Committee Members (DCM's), Archives, Cooperation With The Professional Community (CPC), Public Information (PI), Correctional & Treatment Facilities (CTF), Grapevine, Area/Panel Officers, Central Office/Intergroups, Website, Alternate & Area Delegates.

When and where is NERAASA held?

NERAASA is scheduled for the last full weekend of February each year, rotating throughout the different Delegate Areas of the Northeast Region.

Who should attend NERAASA?

ALL A.A. MEMBERS ARE WELCOME AND ENCOURGED TO ATTEND!

Fellowship Announcements and Things to Do

March 2014

New Publication

Sober and Out is the title of a new Grapevine publication (cost \$11). It is a collection of stories by AA members who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered (and a few friends) from the pages of AA Grapevine.

New Beginner Meeting

Washington Township "How Important Is It Group." Thursdays 7:30 pm. St Charles Borromeo School. Johnson & Stagecoach Rds. Open. Joe 856 589 5710

New Women's Meeting

"Sisters Share and Care." Tuesdays 6:00-7:00 pm. Big Book—Step Study. Zion Lutheran Church, Fairview and Pavilion Aves., Riverside, NJ.

Meeting in need of support

Friday Nite Live Group. Friday 6:00-7:00 pm. Holy Trinity Church, 2211 West Landis Ave., Vineland.

Mark Your Calendar!

Monday, February 23 – "Language of the Heart Group" Mullica Hill is celebrating its 2nd Anniversary. Coffee and dessert at 6:30 pm, followed by a speaker (Susan K) at 7:00 pm. The meeting is located at Trinity United Methodist Church, 284 Cedar Rd., Mullica Hill, NJ. NEW

Monday, February 23 – Bridging the Steps 30th Anniversary. Home cooked Food @ 7:00 pm. Meeting @ 8:00 pm. Speaker: Angela P. from the Casalan Group. Trinity United Methodist Church, 1285 Hornberger Ave., Roebling, NJ. Next to Roebling Town Market.

Saturday, March 7, 2015 – AA in Philadelphia celebrates 75 years. 2:00 pm at the Cathedral Basilica of St. Peter and Paul, 18th and Benjamin Franklin Parkway.

Saturday, March 7 – Sober Saturdays Millville Group will be celebrating its 6th Anniversary with a Speaker Meeting at 9:00 am followed by a Continental Breakfast. Other food dishes and snacks are welcome. First United Methodist Church, 201 N. 2nd at Pine, Millville, NJ.

March 20, 21, 22 – Area 45 Southern New Jersey 51st Annual General Service Convention. The Crowne Plaza Hotel 2349 Marlton Pike (Rt 70) Cherry Hill, NJ 08002. For registration and additional information: snjaaconvention.org and area45conventionreg@gmail.com or call: Debby S. at 856-404-5351 and Kelly W. at 609-817-4691.

Saturday, April 18 – District 14 Unity Event. Dinner-Speaker Meeting followed by Music & Dancing. Church of the Resurrection, Trinity Episcopal Church, 800 E. Wood Street 800 E. Wood Street, Corner of 8th & Wood Sts., Vineland, NJ. For More Information Contact: Greg C.n(856) 238-8488 ghc01@comcast.net. Jessica S. (856)896-5583 jniz1@msn.com Dinner at 6:00 pm

Saturday, June 13 – South Jersey Intergroup will celebrate Founders Day @ Parvin State Park Starting at 10:00 am to 4:00 pm Picnic is FREE everyone is invited.

