

ANONYMOUS SOUTHJERSEY

SOUTH JERSEY INTERGROUP

AUGUST 2014

The 7 Gifts of AA **Life with My Higher Power**

By Patricia P.

My greatest gift from AA has been my Higher Power. When I first came to AA, I believed there was "something", something running the universe, but whatever that "something" was, I had no clue, other than it was very cold, and far, far away. I felt there had to be something running the universe, because the universe was so grand, and so well run, but it certainly wasn't interested in me or my puny little affairs.

Yet, what got me into AA was a prayer--a prayer I said dead drunk one night, contemplating suicide, and too drunk to get off the couch and look for a bottle of pills to take. I said, "God, if you're there, please help me." Then I stumbled off to



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Honesty and Credibility

Step 8: Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

The Steps govern the alcoholic, the Traditions govern the group, and the Concepts govern AA as a world service organization. Is there a connection between these three levels of AA?

In my home group, we do a Tradition meeting each month in place of our ordinary weekly Step meeting. Invariably, there are those (myself included) who let out a collective groan when the Tradition meeting is announced. Members come, sometimes with burning personal problems, expecting some discussion of those problems, only to be told that the discussion will center around our survival as a group. The disappointment in the room is palpable!

To counter this disappointment, I always look for a personal connection between myself and the Tradition under discussion. Step Eight concerns my relations with other people and the harm I have done (and continue to do sometimes) to others. Tradition Eight concerns the relations of my AA home-group with prospective AA's: those still drinking and those wishing

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A New Kind of Love

In sobriety, she learned how to love herself and others

I'm sitting at the base of Greylock Mountain, in Atlanta, Idaho. It's very quiet and I have the gift of this opportunity to contemplate. Soon, I will have my three-year sobriety birthday. It doesn't sound like long, but it's not been easy for me.

I am one who has had to work at it. It took lots of changes, transformations, experiences to get here. It's been worth it, though. My heart is beating a sober rhythm. I feel so clear and am filled with gratitude. I am experiencing a love I have never known and it truly is grace.

I've done a lot of things in my drinking days that I'm not proud of. Even sitting here, in Atlanta, I have memories of these woods—falling on the way back

As I sit here in the mountains, away from the city, away from meetings, away from fellowship, I notice that this love, this peace and serenity I feel is due to finally learning how to care for myself. I am able to sit still and breathe mountain air. I can have a clear, coherent conversation with my friend. I can live and function on a daily basis. I can do all these things without a beer by my side.

*Most importantly, I learned how to love....
This is a love that comes from a place of
peace and serenity inside. It is not
clouded by alcohol. It is inner truth.*

to the cabin, of conversations in the bar that are embarrassing to remember, of all that beer breath I woke up with.

I used to drive up here while drinking. It's a miracle that I am not in prison for all the drunk driving I did. I can see that now. Back then, I couldn't see a thing except how to get drunk and stay drunk, and sober up enough just to work, until I couldn't even do that anymore.

Walking into these rooms of AA when I was lost, blind, and when I was at the end, was the best thing I ever did for me.

Most importantly, I learned how to love. This love is not the slurry, blurry, mushy, crazy, on a buzz, calling people at two in the morning love. This is a love that comes from a place of peace and serenity inside. It is not clouded by alcohol. It is inner truth. It is clear. It is still. It is silence. It is a love I have never known, and I'm so excited for more! I am beginning to experience some happiness.

My heart is full and resonates like a drum to the rhythm of a sober walk. It's because of the program of AA that I am here. For this, I continue to buy a ticket for a seat in this place! What a great ride!

—Brenda M., Boise, Idaho

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As Bill Sees It



Self-searching is the means by which we bring new vision, action and grace to bear upon the dark and negative side of our natures. With it comes the development of that kind of humility that makes it possible for us to receive God's help. (Page 10)

Bicycling With Adam

(Editor's Note: rarely spotted without his famous bicycle and cycling cap and other gear, Adam proved extremely difficult for me to track down and squeeze a story out of. Now that I have, I'm going to keep on bugging him for more: so Adam, be forewarned!)

The point when I decided to let my higher power run things was one of my easiest and at the same time best, decisions I ever made. I am by nature a lazy man, so, when I get someone else to do



the thinking and the driving, well, you get the point.

During the worst of my drinking days, I would often

lament leaving the service because of its paternal aspect. Just do as you're told, and everything will be

okay. However, I wanted more. I didn't realize that in my bid for independence, I would become totally dependent.

I do a lot of bicycling alone. On the road with just God and I, I hear, or more precisely, feel, his direction. I ask questions (it's my nature) and I get answers (not always to my liking). As time passes, I'm getting more and more comfortable and more accepting of his will.

One thing I don't question, and that is the undisputable fact that the life I'm living now is, in every conceivable way, better than the one I had.

--Adam R

Gifts of AA

(From page 1)

doing every night for the past two years.

The next morning, I woke up with a sense of hope for the first time in many, many months. It was like a ray of sunshine had entered my dark and dismal world. Six months later, through a chain of events I now know was my Higher Power's response to my prayer, I was sitting in my first AA meeting. And then commenced a spiritual awakening that is still unfolding to this day.

One of the great beauties of AA--and one of the reasons it works--is that everyone gets to choose their Higher Power. And everyone is right. There are no wrong Higher Powers. All are acceptable. Plus, it is acceptable not to have a Higher Power. But I can tell you, if I lived a life without a Higher Power, it would be a miserable life. My Higher Power has evolved into one that cares about me, that I can and do connect with, and that guides me when I ask for guidance. (And maybe when I don't.) Today I have a personal relationship with my Higher Power, as a result of working the steps and AA. What a gift.

I can't imagine my life without my Higher Power, and without AA. Well, I can. I just don't want to.

I have pursued other spiritual paths--the Big Book tells us to do so if we want to ("Be quick to see where religious people are right. Make use of what they offer." p.87)--and I have found some I've incorporated into my daily life. But always AA is central to my spiritual path, for it is there I found MY Higher Power--the one that works for me.

About the Seven Gifts of AA: *Recently, I was asked to speak at a meeting. I came up with the idea of talking about what it's like now in terms of the gifts I've received from AA. Seven gifts came to mind. Last month I wrote about gratitude. This month, I write about the gift of sharing. --Patricia P.*

AA 12th Step Work Is Never To Be Paid For

Tradition Eight: Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.

When I first looked at this tradition, I did not understand what it meant by —nonprofessional. I understood, or at least I thought I did, that special workers such as secretaries, writers, business professionals and others would be employed by AA, particularly at the national level. However, when I took a look at the long form of tradition 8, I learned that this tradition was focused on 12th step

work and that nonprofessional meant that AAs should not get paid for helping another alcoholic.

Long Form: Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional. We define professionalism as the occupation of counseling alcoholics for fees or hire. But we may employ alcoholics where they are going to perform those services for which we may otherwise have to engage nonalcoholics. Such special services may be well recompensed. But our usual A.A. "12th Step" work is never to be paid for.

But what about those people in AA who are drug and alcohol counselors and do this for a living? Does this go against the 8th tradition? Are they getting paid for helping another alcoholic? The answer is no and yes. It doesn't go against the 8th tradition but they are getting paid for helping another alcoholic. The difference is their work is NOT 12th step work. Their work is based on professional training and is different than an alcoholic helping another alcoholic. An alcoholic or a

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Step Eight

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to stop drinking. Should these be approached professionally or not?

The Eighth Tradition is quite clear that my approach, and the group's approach, to all others, should be always and forever, non-professional. The Tradition tells me that my relations to others outside the group, alcoholics or not, should be on a personal level; using my experience, strength and hope, as a recovering alcoholic and only that. The personal approach, is the only effective way that we as AA's have found, to possibly reach another suffering alcoholic and be believed. The Tradition also tells me that anytime money or employment for hire or any other agenda comes into play, it will dilute my ability to honestly reach another prospective AA member.

The Eighth Concept (from the Twelve Concepts for World Service) lays out the duties and limitations of the Trustees of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous in New York. It states that their role is one of "custodial oversight" of the various and respective committees of AA as a world (non) organization. It also highlights the fact that, as a group, AA may hire paid service workers: workers that any group needs to function: custodians, cleaners, office-workers to answer mail and oversee publications and distribution, money-managers, etc.

On all levels, Step, Tradition and Concept, the common theme is honesty and credibility. How do I and the group and the world organization, best contribute to my own sobriety and growth and the sobriety and growth of others? The basic message here is one of purity: any other concern besides that of entirely unselfish caring for my own sobriety and my relationship with all others (prospective AA's or not), will diminish my effectiveness as an individual in recovery and as a carrier of AA's message of spiritual recovery.

--Masonville Marty

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.

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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

Editor's Corner

A couple of things concern me this month. The first is an announcement received by the Newsletter for the website, "recoveryspeakers.com." I believe that the site is the personal project of "an AA pioneer and his wife" who have gathered together and digitized "thousands of recovery talks." I have visited the site and it seems responsible and trustworthy and an honest effort to provide an online resource to access thousands of recovery speakers. The problem for this editor is that the site is not "AA approved" literature (i.e., not approved by the General Service Board of AA).



I say "problem" because my first impulse was to go ahead and print the site as an announcement. My thought was, let members access the site and decide for themselves its value as a recovery resource. I did not do this because I know that other Intergroup workers and service members might object to non-AA-approved sites being announced in this Newsletter.

I would like to hear the input of other members on this topic. I invite our readers to write the Newsletter and let us know your feelings on this. Perhaps a visit to "recoveryspeakers.com" might help before you write. But, in any event, let's hear!

The second subject of concern this month is that of money. The discouraging news from Intergroup was that collections and donations from member groups are down; way down (although since the initial report, donations have picked up somewhat).

Intergroup cannot survive without monetary support from the member groups. If you want to see what Intergroup does with your money, go to our website (aasj.org).

This Newsletter is planning an issue in the coming months devoted solely or largely to the question of money and AA. We'd like to hear from members on this subject and invite everyone to submit comments and articles on this topic. Thanks as always.

Editor

Founder's Day Picnic 2014

This year's Founder's Day Picnic was well attended. Some 150 folks turned out to enjoy an awesome day of Food, Fun and Fellowship.

Thanks to Eddie S. for choosing Parvin Park as the site for the event and for his tireless work in planning the event and then churning out non-stop Burgers and Dogs on the charcoal-fired grill.

Mother Nature gave us an incredibly warm, summery day and it seemed that everyone who attended had a great time. There was plenty of Fellowship to go around and we got a chance to catch-up with old friends from all over the Southern New Jersey AA Hemisphere.

Thanks to Keith K., the day's AA speaker, for sharing his incredible story with us. Several folks won a copy of the 75th Anniversary Big Book.

I hope to see many more successful events in the future from the Social Events Committee. If you have an idea for an event, or would like to see an old event revived, come join the Intergroup Social Committee. They can always use new and old ideas and the extra help.

*Peace to all,
Andy E.*

Tradition Eight

(Continued from page 4)

nonalcoholic can do the counseling work, and based on their training and education, should be compensated for their work. These counselors, as part of their treatment, acknowledge the value of the steps and often support attendance at meetings, getting a sponsor and engaging in step work. The counselor is doing this as part of his or her job, not to help themselves stay sober. Remember, the essence of 12th step work is that carrying the message of AA to another alcoholic helps both the stepper and the step-ee stay sober.

The 8th Tradition is designed to ensure that anyone reaching out for help regarding his or her alcohol use will receive it, free of charge. This is 12th step work. AA members freely share their own experience with fellow alcoholics and by doing so, help in their own recovery in the process. As A.A. members representing the A.A. program we are all volunteers and the only expertise we claim is our own experiences as active alcoholics. Even speakers at conventions share their experience, strength, and hope free of charge.

The bottom line is, the 8th tradition reminds us that only an alcoholic can do 12th step work and should not take money for it.

--Andrew P., Haddonfield, NJ



Announcements

New Big Book Meeting

5:00 pm Tuesdays at Temple Lutheran Church, 5600 Rt.130 N. & Merchantville Ave., Pennsauken

NEW DATE!

Marlton Meeting Moved Temporarily

The noon meetings at Prince of Peace, Route 70, Marlton, NJ will be held at Dance Time of NJ, 3003 Lincoln Drive West, Marlton, from July 21–25 (Vacation Bible Study at Prince of Peace.)

Area 45 Corrections Committee Meetings Schedule

The next scheduled meetings for the Area 45 Corrections Committee are July 27, September 28 and October 26. Centenary United Methodist Church 151 S. White Horse Pike, Berlin, NJ 08009. All meetings start at 1:00 p.m. sharp. For more upcoming dates, please contact: Chair, Kathy Jo @ 609-790-3740 or KJSwersky@gmail.com; or Co-Chair, Judy K. @ 856-404-3057 or Judyn413@gmail.com.

Area 45 Inventory

Area 45 is taking its inventory on September 06. It's a Saturday at Carl's Lake Community Center, Crosswick Street in Bordentown 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. Registration at 9:30. There will be coffee and donuts.

Friday Night Live

"Friday Night Live" group has returned. Holy Trinity Church, 2211 W. Landis Ave., Vineland, NJ 6:00 PM. Basement of church.

New Morning Meeting

Fridays at 7:30 AM. The River Church, 222 S. Broad St. Penn's Grove, NJ. "As Bill Sees It" reading meeting.

The Last Stop Presents *Speaker Jam IV*

Saturday August 23rd 2014

@ S.K.A. 2418 Kensington Ave. Philadelphia PA 19125

Rain or Shine

Eddie Z 10:00 – 11:00 Step 1

Brian W 11:15 – 12:15 Step 2

Glenn S 12:30 – 1:30 Step 3

Sean 1:45 – 2:45 Steps 4 & 5

Dave Malloy 3:00 – 4:00 Steps 6 & 7

Nard 4:15 – 5:15 Steps 8 & 9

Nina 5:30 – 6:30 Step 10

Mike C 6:45 – 7:45 Step 11

Joe K 8:00 – 9:00 Step 12

Food fun & Fellowship

Dance afterwards with DJ Cheese Boom

50/50 Drawing at 9PM

Sober Voices: Meetings by Phone

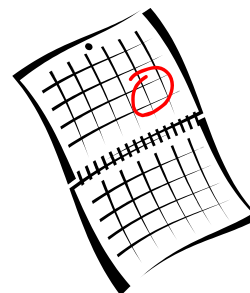
There's a new meeting in town and it's no place and every place! It's called "Sober Voices" and it takes place entirely on the telephone. The meeting is listed with the General Service Office and you can take part. For more information, call Tim at **702-767-8291** or visit their website:

<https://sites.google.com/site/aatelephonemeetings/home>.

Mark Your Calendars!

August 2014

July 25-27 - Alcoholics needed to chair A.A. meetings at Jal-Con 2014 ("Serenity's Gifts"), the Jersey Al-Anon Convention. Fifty topic meetings, speakers (AA, Al-Anon, and Al-Ateen), banquet, dance, raffle, literature for sale. Sheraton Edison Hotel, 125 Raritan Center Parkway, Edison, NJ, 08837. Pre-registration by mail or online is \$35 or \$40 at the door. For online registration, go to whoscoming.com/jalcon. To volunteer to chair A.A. meetings, contact Dave MacD at davemacd21482@com-cast.net or call (856) 358-2952.



Sunday July 27th 2014 - 4th Annual Bike Run, 818 N. Broad St. Woodbury NJ Riding to Fort Mott and then back to the KISS Club F F F early reg. \$15 Rider - \$5 Passenger Day of Reg. \$20 Rider - \$10 Passenger Register, 8:00 am continental breakfast, kick stands up at 10:30 am. BBQ only is \$10 per person. 50/50; T-shirts \$15 or 2 for \$25 (men & women's available). For More info call Heidi: 609-556-7554; Chief: 609-221-8260; Jimmy: 609-970-2483. Outside Venders, space is available. Call for details.

Thursday, July 31 - Swedesboro 11th anniversary at the Bethesda Methodist Church in Swedesboro. There will be ice cream sundae making at 7:00 pm and reading and a speaker starting at 7:30 pm.

Saturday, August 2 - Area 45 Corrections Committee 19th Annual Inter-Area Conference "Freedom from Bondage" 9:00 am – 1:00 pm. St. Charles Borromeo RC Church, 176 Stagecoach Rd., Sicklerville, NJ, Hot breakfast & 6 Speakers. Chair: Kathy Jo @ 609-790-3740 or KJSwersky@gmail.com or Co-Chair: Judy K. at 856-404-3057 or Judy413@gmail.com

Friday, August 15 - The Collingswood Ballroom will have a dinner/show to help Maryville recovery center celebrate their 65 years of addiction treatment. From 6:30-10:00 pm. For more info call - Melissa at 856-227-2717.

Saturday, August 16 - Fun Night Out hosted by District 13 - Salem County. 7:05 pm. Wilmington Blue Rocks Minor League Baseball Game. Wilmington vs. Winston-Salem at Frawley Stadium. \$10 per person. Call: Kathy P. 856-678-9412 for info & tickets. Very kid-friendly event. Free parking. Bluerocks.com. Go to Ballpark Info link for directions, Bluerocks.com.

Sunday, August 24 - District 14 9th Annual Picnic, noon to 6:00 pm. \$10 (Under 12-FREE). Jersey Oaks Camp, 80 Batter Cake Ln, Lower Alloway Creek, near Maskells Millpond Fish Wildlife Mgmt. West of Rt. 49 So-Quinton/Salem. Door Prizes, 50/50, Arts & Crafts, BYO Chair & Sports Equipment, Food & Speakers! Side Dishes Welcome! Anthony A-856-455-0416, Electric Dave-609-536-5140

Tuesday, August 26 - District 13 Salem Co. Hosts FUN Nite OUT. Blue Rocks Minor League Baseball Game \$10 ea. 6:45 pm. Call Kathy P. 856-678-9412 to Book Tix. VERY kid-friendly event. FREE parking. ALL WELCOME!

Monday, September 8 - Pennsville Churchtown Group District 13 meeting 6:30 pm. Planning for workshop at Assembly of God, 328 No. Broadway, Pennsville.

October 9-12 - 18th Nat'l AA Archives Workshop "Love & Service"- Doubletree Hilton, 301 W. Dekalb Pie, Route 202, opposite King of Prussia Mall. Optional Bus Trips Oct. 8 Stepping Stones, Oct. 9 AAWS GSO. Overflow hotels. Visit [AA Nationalarchivesworkshop.com](http://AANationalarchivesworkshop.com) or Call Co-Chair Anne Marie at 215-205-5390, or Shakey Mike 610-212-0812. For info, email: NAAAW2014@yahoo.com if interested in AA Archives.