

ANONYMOUS SOUTHJERSEY

SOUTH JERSEY INTERGROUP

August 2017

The Gifts and Tools

Sobriety didn't take away his problems, but it gave him tools to solve them

For years, no matter how hard I tried, I could not fight the obsession to drink. On the rare occasion that I was able to keep myself away from a drink, I remember it being one of the most difficult tasks I had ever done. In one instance, I remember staying home on a Friday night with the intention of getting up early in the morning to spend the entire next day on the beach. Needless to say, my plan backfired when I realized how difficult it was to sleep while fighting the obsession to drink.



My decision to start attending AA meetings was entirely based on fear. I had amassed so many problems over a few short years and chose to ignore them rather than address them. I eventually found myself broke, in debt, faced with criminal charges, and a stranger to my own family. This being my jumping off point, I enrolled in an intensive outpatient program as I figured it was a good half-measure solution to my problem. And since it required me to attend AA meetings, I did just that in order to make sure I "graduated" from the outpatient program in case it should one day sway a judge in my criminal case.

I had hoped I would gain some profound insight into alcoholism that would enable me to drink "normally" again one day. It was during this time that I began to learn about my disease, the program of Alcoholics Anonymous, and the gifts of sobriety. I almost instantly began to feel better. I arrived early before sessions

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Poetics of the Steps

Editor's note: Part 1 of 2 of The Poetics of the Steps. Here are steps one through six. Continued on page 4.

Step One

I am powerless over alcohol,
my life is unmanageable.

Who or what is the "I" that is powerless?
Is it "my" life, after all:
do I own it,
do I possess it?

If "I" is not real, than what exactly is the problem here?

The "I" that I think I am,
that thing, that idea, that concept
is destroyed by drink.

Whatever it is, it wants to drink and keep on
drinking
until overtaken by obliteration.
It knows no bounds,
neither of poverty nor of soul.

For powerlessness to take hold as an idea,
to really take hold,
the "I" must be forsaken,
must be jettisoned,
must be given up,
must be surrendered;
for, it never was real.

Again, I do not become manageable,
nor does "my" life become so;
manageability is just what I step into;
what I become, what I wear
from day to day.

I trade the "I" for manageability,
peace, and serenity.

Editorial Policy

Anonymous South Jersey is a monthly newsletter published by and for members of South Jersey. Opinions expressed herein are NOT to be attributed to AA as a whole, nor does publication of information imply any endorsement by either AA or South Jersey Intergroup. Quotations and artwork from AA literature are printed with permission from AA World Services, Inc., and/or the AA Grapevine, Inc.

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@asj.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

A.A. Trivia Question

August 2017: What do you do if you can't keep your Bookers Commitment?

July 2017 Question: I want to bring my homegroup's concerns and suggestions to Intergroup but I feel like I just listen and take notes at the Intergroup meeting. How do I make my group heard?

Answer: The most important vote the Intergroup body makes is to elect the panel of trusted servants who make most of the operational decisions for Intergroup over a period of 2 years. We welcome feedback from the groups and appreciate the trust that they give us and God as He may express Himself in our group conscience at the Steering committee meetings.

The most effective way to bring other ideas to Intergroup is to reach out to the committee that handles the issue that your group is concerned about. If you're not sure who that is or you need more help you can e-mail asj.org or drop your suggestion in our suggestion box.

If these approaches do not work, you do have the option of raising a motion during new business at the monthly Intergroup meeting. Please be sure to see the secretary and submit the motion in writing prior to the motion being made from the floor.

Please remember that we are all trusted servants doing the best we can to stay sober and help other alcoholics achieve sobriety.

Tools

From page 1

started, hung out and talked for a while afterwards, and began to make friends. Most importantly of all, I started to get connected to the program of AA.

The stories of recovery I heard at AA meetings drew my attention right from the beginning. I identified with everyone that I listened to and realized that the problems I had accumulated could one day be solved. At my second meeting, I met the man who would sponsor me for about the first 6 months of my sobriety. Even though I knew nothing about him and he lived quite a long distance from me, I impulsively asked him to sponsor me. It was the best impulse decision I have ever made! Not knowing what I was getting myself into, I began working with my sponsor one day per week by reading aloud from the Big Book.

—Matt L., Nutley, N.J.

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August Service Opportunities

Answering service:

Currently we have shifts open on Sunday 2pm to 4pm, Wednesday 12pm to 2pm, Friday 8am to 10am, Friday 6pm to 8pm.

We also continue to take name for our waiting list, and are still taking AA members to sign up to be available for a 12 Step call, so please have interested people continue to contact us via answerservice@aasj.org.

Literature Sales:

The Monday 10 am – noon shift is open. Please contact Jimmy at literature@aasj.org if you are interested.

Newsletter Articles:

Please submit articles for September newsletter to newsletter@aasj.org by August 9th.

Committee Service:

The following committees are looking for some new people to get involved with possibilities for

stepping into the committee chairperson position: Answering Service, Bookers, Budget and Finance, Meeting List, Newsletter and Unity. Please reach out to the current chairperson or e-mail info@aasj.org for more information.

Intergroup Officers:

New Intergroup Officers will be elected in December to serve for 2018-2019. If you are interested for running for an officer position please e-mail trustees@aasj.org or call 856-486-4446.

Speaking Commitments

Hospitals and Institutions (H&I) is looking for speakers to visit the following facilities. Please contact Patti or Frank at handi@aasj.org if you are able to take one of these commitments.

Monday

Ancora State Hospital, 202 Spring Garden Rd, Hammonton 7 – 8 pm August 7, 28

Tuesday

Delaware House, 21 Ikea Drive, Westhampton, 2 – 3 pm July 25, August 1, 22, 29

Wednesday

Solstice Counseling Services, 1561 Rt. 38 W, Lumberton, 12 – 1 pm, July 26
Unity Place I, 1 Keystone Ave, Cherry Hill NJ 12:40 - 1:30 pm, August 2, 16, 23
Camden VOA - 510 Liberty Street, Camden, 7 - 8 pm August 30

Thursday

Ancora - 202 Spring Garden Rd, Hammonton, 7 – 8 pm, August 3, 10, 17, 24, 31
Unity Place II, 121 S White Horse Pike, Hammonton, 2 – 3 pm, August 3, 17, 31
Daybreak - MICA - 368 White Horse Pike, Atco NJ 10:30 am - 12pm, July 27, August 10, 17, 24, 31

Friday

Vineland Victory Academy - 2000 Maple Avenue, Vineland, NJ 7-8pm August 11, 25

Meeting Real Estate: Assisted Living Facility in Pennsauken is looking for assistance with starting a meeting at their location. Please contact info@aasj.org for contact information.

Poetics of the Steps

Step Two

I took Step Two on my knees
Forced there by a power, a weight
Surely bigger than I

I knew not this power
Until I felt its effect

It took a broken, crumbled me
And put me in my place
On my knees

I had no other place to go
All my refuges had deserted me
There was no other place to go.

Insanity is the gap between
The reality of me (God)
And my thoughts.

Insanity is my thoughts
Nietzsche's consciousness is a
disease
The disease itself.

Where else to go from my knees?
Directly to a meeting;
The only place to go
To meet my 'self'
Restored to its proper size
Its proper function;
The only sanity it can know:
Where "to know" is "to be."

Step Three

What is there to turn over?
The poison that is me?

I can only handle so much of this drug called me;
As time passes, I can handle less and less of it
Like a real drunk
I only need a little to get drunk
Sometimes a single thought, belief or opinion
Is all that it takes for an emotional hangover.

Whatever thought comes along
Is turned over
That is the process
Until the disturbance, the pain
Passes
Thought, belief, opinion, position
That is the pain.

Surrender means turning it over,
Letting it go
So it stops poisoning me.

Like the Greeks' *pharmakon*,
The poison is the cure
Thought is the cure when I must judge a red light from a green
It is the poison when I feel that it is real and applies to myself or
to others.

Only God can handle my thoughts
I cannot
Here my will is my thoughts
And vice versa.

Step Five

Why talk?
What does talking do for me?
Isn't every sharing (one alcoholic to another) a Step Five in disguise?

Admitted to God, to myself and to another:
Are these separate steps?
Is an 'admission' different from ordinary talk?
Or is every alcoholic, in talking at any length,
Bound to make admissions?

About those things that seriously bother me,
I say nothing at all.
There is the rub (as Shakespeare might say).

Do I judge myself or do I confess?
Is this the same process?

Just talk
The talk, the stream, the conversation,
Will find its own flow,
Will seek its own level,
Like a river.

Poetics of the Steps

Step Four

Is there anything poetic about Step Four?
Isn't this just work?
Do work and art mix?

This is my attempt to join art and recovery,
One thought, one feeling, one axiom,
Begetting another.

If I could get over Step Four,
The rest would be easier,
By comparison.

The difference is between looking at myself,
And judging myself.
Self-judgement leads to depression;
The trick is to look, assess, be real, be harsh, be honest;
But do not judge,
For nothing here is good nor bad;
These are the labels that seize up progress
And spiritual development
(if by 'spiritual development' we mind ascending to higher
levels
Like Dante's ascension to paradise
Or other ascensions that we know.

Thank-you AA for giving me my life back
And my literature
And my art
And a self that I do not always like
The good, the bad, and the ugly?
These are labels that hinder progress
I am neither
I just am
As I am
With what is me
So I make a list
And do not judge
And do not fear
Just look and see
And now we move on.



Step Six

Freud says there are no typos without a hidden
meaning;
Is that why I typed "Step Sux"?
It does "suck" in my opinion.
It's the most distasteful Step to me.

Whose defects are they anyway?
They cannot be mine if there is no "me"!

So what am I asking God to do?

Remove "defects" in general?

What I really find, what the real process is,
Goes like so: As the "me" fades from view,
As a separate entity,
Defects just fall away;
I no longer own them.

What is ownership anyway?
Isn't it just another iteration of a personal identity
that is a myth?

No ownership, no defects that are mine, no
shame, no judgment, no guilt, to block progress.

Just a fading away, a shedding, a true "removal"
as both me and the defects fall away.

Get Out and Get Involved

Thurs. July 27 – Swedesboro 11th anniversary at the Bethesda Methodist Church in Swedesboro. There will be ice cream sundae making at 7:00 and reading and a speaker starting at 7:30.

Fri. Aug. 11 – Vineland "Steps thru the book" group 3rd anniversary Trinity Episcopal Ch 8th and Wood Sts. Vineland 6:30pm - 7:30pm pizza and subs. with speaker mtg to follow.

Sun. Aug. 13 – Millville Sunday Night Grp is celebrating its 33rd Anniversary with FFF starting at 7:00pm, followed by a Speaker Meeting at 8:00pm (Chuck S. 44yrs, Franklinville, NJ). Christ Episcopal Church, 2nd & Sassafras, Millville. For more info contact: Marci R. 856-776-3149.

Sun. Aug. 13 – Intergroup will sponsor a canoe and kayak trip @ Micks Pine Barrens. @3107 County Rd 563, Chatsworth, NJ at 10am. Price \$10pp. For more info call Sal:609-741-7393.

Sat. Aug. 19 – Monroeville come join our party for FFF all side dishes are appreciated. Local: 104 Dutch Row Rd. Monroeville, NJ Starting at 2pm. More info call Mike Ramsey: [856-358-0655](tel:856-358-0655).

Sat. Aug. 19 – District 13 Annual Picnic. Food, swimming and a speaker from 3:00 PM to 8:00 PM at Splash Sports Club, 118 E Pittsfield Road, Pennsville, NJ. For more information contact Geni at 856-540-8070 or Larry at 856-281-4697.

Sun. Aug. 27 – Pittsgrove Parvin State Park Thundergust Picnic Grove Pavilions 13th annual district 14 picnic from 11am - 4pm - suggested donation \$10, 16 and under free. Bring lawn chairs and all food donations welcomed. For more info call: Anthony856-455-0416.



As Bill Sees It

“Moments of perception can turn into a lifetime of spiritual serenity, as I have excellent reason to know. Roots of reality, supplanting the neurotic underbrush, will hold fast despite the high winds of forces that would destroy us, or which we would use to destroy ourselves.”

As Bill Sees It, page 173