

STEP SEVEN

“Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.”

A Vital Lesson In Humility: The notion that self-reliance failed me utterly had become crystal clear after a long battle to drink successfully. I had finally fully surrendered to the fact that I could not drink, and of myself, I could not muster the needed Power to stay sober regardless of my strong self will and despite my seeming intellectual capabilities. I found myself utterly hopeless and emotionally bankrupt following my final relapse. I was DOOMED.

At that point, the pain had become great enough that I was willing to fire myself as the manager of my own life and seek new management. God provided this new management in my life the very moment that I admitted complete defeat, fell to my knees, and humbly sought him.

God overwhelmed my life with the needed Power that I had searched in vain for in this world for so long. The Power that I was unable to provide to myself. The Power that the people and things of this world, including alcohol, lacked.

I've been told that God is a Gentleman and doesn't enter into the human heart without being invited. I have found this statement to be true in my journey, and therefore, I continue to invite God into my heart and ask for help daily.

With new direction in my life, I completed a moral inventory of myself which brought to the light of day several glaring character defects and patterns of behavior that were unhealthy for myself and for the people I loved (which by this point included all of God's other children, even the individuals whom I once viewed as my enemies). The inventory process had not only revealed my character defects, but had also uncovered a genuine compassion for my fellows.

I had to change, but how? I realized that I could no longer continue the way I was living now that my inventory was glaring at me in black and white in front of God and another human being.

Once again, I needed Power. I needed help with my shortcomings, which admittedly, were intricately ingrained into my very being. I was willing to have God remove them. I was no longer willing to cling to them as I now saw them as a stumbling block.

The time had arrived to fulfill God's purpose for my life. After all, God saved me from a hopeless pit of despair and from the crushing self-imposed pain of a self-centered existence. There was a price to be paid for this freedom.

I saw the shackles of self that had held me down for too long and continually brought me back to seeking relief in a bottle. Now, the mental obsession to drink had been removed, and it was time to go further. I was willing to give all of myself to God, the good and the bad.

I humbly asked him to remove the defects of character that stood in the way of my usefulness to him and to others. "Please God, remove my character defects; take them root and branch!" Like a true gentleman, he obliged and provided the Power so desperately needed for change.

All that was needed from me was the willingness to take an honest, open-minded look at my shortcomings, a willingness to grow, and enough humility to ask for God's help to change.

Despite my shortcomings, I believe my God takes great pride in my creation and includes me as an integral part of his perfect plan. With continued humility to ask daily for his Power to change and grow allows me to bask in the warmth and security of the sunlight of God's spirit, and that is all I've ever really needed. I am free. Thank God for AA.

~ Written by Lina C.

TRADITION SEVEN

“Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.”

As you can learn by reading the Seventh Tradition in the *12 Steps and Twelve Traditions* and *Dr. Bob and the Good Old timers*, A.A. started out poor and soon learned the importance of staying poor. This tradition is based on the premise of the irresponsible become responsible.

Many of us come into A.A. with our finances in ruin. It is important for a newcomer to watch how a group can pay bills and give a contribution to General Service so they can apply these functions in their own lives. Additionally, if A.A. accepted outside contributions, our organization would be wealthy, and the newcomer would not be compelled to contribute any little bit they may have. Contribution makes us feel a part of. Bill stated that the place that spirituality and money would mix is in the hat.

The spirit of this Tradition also means that non-alcoholic visitors are encouraged to refrain from putting money in the basket. We have depended on others long enough. This tradition is in place to demonstrate our willingness and independence.

-Anonymous

Sobriety during Covid

It has been very interesting times these past few months due to Covid pandemic.

Workshops look different, conferences look different, and anniversary celebrations look different. So many changes.

We are now using Zoom to get connected to everyone. It is such an unusual way to connect. I prefer the way before Covid.- In fact, I was a little resistant to the on-line meetings. Meeting up with friends at meetings is something I look forward to each week, for home group, and during the week with others I regularly attend. I miss my people!

The fact is, we are truly blessed to have the capability of Zoom for meetings. There may be so many groups all over the world that do not have this platform. I have to remember to add this to my gratitude list every day.

Another part I really miss are the conferences, where we get to see so many of our friends in one place. We get to see old friends and meet new ones. The opportunities for service are one of the many fun things we get to do at the conferences!

There are a few upsides to this pandemic though. On any given day I get to attend a meeting in Texas, or Toronto, or even Australia! How cool is that? Meet new folks from all over the world. I will miss this once we open up!

The bottom line is stay connected, no what our reservations. My routine to stay in fit spiritual condition are the same: prayer, meetings, service, and sponsorship. It may look different, but they are the tools for sound recovery. I am so very grateful for God, AA and the groups of people I get to connect with everyday!

In love and peace,

Patti



"I am Responsible. When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there. And for that: I am responsible."

Please consider making a personal contribution to Alcoholics Anonymous at AA.org. Due to face-to-face meetings being cancelled, no group donations are being made.

Inside This Issue: "Step Seven- Tradition Seven" " This Month In AA History " " News and Events" " Articles from AA Members

To Newcomers

Welcome to Alcoholics Anonymous. This can be where life starts. When I came into AA, I was in a county jail in Pennsylvania. I thought my life was over. Being in jail just wasn't something people in my family did. Dad, after all, was a District Magistrate. I was horrified to find myself in jail for a crime I committed in a blackout. Horrified.

I was more freaked out though by the fact that I was going to AA.

That was 30 years ago. What I discovered, early on, was that my life wasn't over because I was sober. As usual, my thinking was exactly backwards. My life, my real life, started when I got to AA.

In my drinking and drugging days, I had many amazing experiences and was given many opportunities. I managed to blow the opportunities and failed to learn from the experiences.

Life in sobriety has given me more experiences and opportunities than I can tell you. I've learned and have had successes. I've also failed sometimes. But I learned from those failures. I have a great life that has taken me all around the country, given a happy marriage, great friend, a house and has given me my career back.

No one can talk sobriety into you. It's not possible. What we can do, is tell you what we did; what worked and what didn't work. If you want what we have and are willing to go to any length to Listen, then AA will work for you.

I suggest that you do the following: Read the Big Book and the 12 and 12, work the steps, get a sponsor and go to lots of meetings and don't stop going. Everything applies to all of us.

Welcome to AA.

Eric E.



**Area 45
Corrections
Workshop**

7/18/20

10:30 am - 12:00 pm

Virtual Event

Join Zoom Meeting
Meeting ID: 828 8312 4276
Password: 953989

Dial In
+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

The invitation features three icons: a jail cell with hands on bars, the AA logo with 'RECOVERY' underneath, and a pair of handcuffs. At the bottom, a Windows taskbar is visible with icons for various applications.

The views and opinions expressed herein are those of each individual and do not necessarily represent the opinions or policy of South Jersey Intergroup or AA as a whole.



BIARRITZ INTERNATIONAL A.A. CONVENTION

October 9, 2020 to October 11, 2020

Venue: Le Grand Large , 1 rue Dalbarade, 64200 Biarritz, France

DURING COVID-19 LOCK-DOWN VENUE HOTEL RESERVATIONS ARE SHUT.

(Attempts to book dates on the hotel website will show hotel as fully booked.)

- Al-Anon & YPAA participation
- Theme: KEEP IT SIMPLE

Speakers: Karen Casey, Ph.D., lecturer, and program member since 1974 will be the speaker of note,

Karen will also facilitate a two-hour workshop/presentation on the Saturday afternoon.

Karen is author of recovery reference books "Each Day A New Beginning", "In God's Care", among over 25 other books.

ALL accommodations HAVE UNOBSTRUCTED OCEAN/SUNSET VIEW

- Fly direct to Biarritz Airport (BIQ)
- Website: <https://aaconventionbiarritz.com>
- Registration: Pre-Registration (online) €35.00 (after 30 August €42.00)
 - Venue Accommodation from €55.00/night/person (B&B)
 - Alternative Accommodation from €30.00/night/person (B&B)
- Extend your stay at convention discounted tariffs, enjoy tourism in the region



Words of Wisdom

When first getting sober it was often asked of the newcomer, “Are you willing to go to any lengths to get and stay sober?” That is a question I have periodically asked myself when posed with doing something I don’t want to do. These include doing a 5th or 10th step, picking up or speaking with a newcomer and being the intergroup rep for my group? I am by nature, a selfish person, I want to do, or not do, what is comfortable for me. Getting sober was not comfortable. However, I did the things that were suggested because obviously my way was not working. I initially did not like going to meetings, I did not like listening to certain people speak in meetings, and I had a better way to run things, but no one was listening. Despite being uncomfortable, I stayed sober, and learned to be comfortable in the uncomfortableness. Now, when I feel a twinge of not wanting to do something, I lean into it. That has made today’s current climate with COVID-19 and meetings on Zoom a much more comfortable place.

AA is about change. An old-timer was once asked, “How have you stayed sober so long,” his reply, “Don’t drink and change your whole life!” The attendance of meetings has changed, temporarily. Am I still willing to go to any length to stay sober? As a member of AA, I have a responsibility to be there for the newcomer, regardless of the format that it’s presented in, meetings in a church or clubhouse, pen pal in prison or rural community, phone calls, and even on Zoom.

Kevin L.

Young and Sober

I attended my first AA meeting when I was 17 years old to support a friend who recently got out of rehab and was going to AA. I acknowledged I was an alcoholic at my first meeting, though I was unwilling and unable to do anything about it. I was 18 years old, a senior in high school, when I finally did something about it, that was April 10, 1983.

I am obviously no longer young, as my friends and family like to point out, but I am still sober. It was frightening to think that I would no longer have my most important friend, alcohol, with me the rest of my life. It was overwhelming at times. When attending AA, everyone seemed so much older, because they were. However, looking back now, they were probably younger than I am now. Regardless, I kept going to meetings because I had nowhere else to go, this was the only thing that was working.

While attending meetings I eventually met other young people, which afforded me the opportunity to socialize

with my peers. We enjoyed going to a diner after a meeting and laughing for hours. We also relished going to the movies, dances, concerts, ballgames, and the shore, or just going to a friend’s house, hanging out until the morning and laughing. Everything else that people my age were doing, except without alcohol. With those of us that stayed sober, these have been life-long friendships.

Kevin L.



EDITORIAL POLICY

Anonymous South Jersey is a monthly newsletter published by and for members of South Jersey Alcoholics Anonymous. 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@aasj.org.

THIS MONTH IN AA HISTORY

July 22, 1877 – Willian Duncan Silkworth born in Brooklyn, NY.

July 7, 1940 – Bill attends first summer session at School of Alcohol Studies at Yale University.

July 23, 1940 – Philly AA's send 10% of kitty to Alcoholic Foundation, setting precedent.

July 24, 1943 – L.A. press reports formation of all-Mexican AA Group.

July 28-30, 1950 – First AA Convention celebrates 15th anniversary of AA in Cleveland.

July 2-3, 1955 – 5000 attend 20th Anniversary at our St Louis Convention; Bill W. turns "the fellowship over to the fellowship" at 4:00 PM

July 2, 1960 – Father Ed Dowling dies.

July 2, 1965 – First La Vigne, the Canadian version of the Grapevine, is published.

July 3-5, 1970 – 10,900 attend 35th Anniversary of AA in Miami; Bill W. gives his last talk to AA.

July 31, 1972 – Rollie H., former baseball player, dies sober in Washington DC.

July 3-6, 1980 – Gay AA's have own program at 40th AA Anniversary in New Orleans.

July 22, 1980 – Marty M., early AA woman and founder of National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependency (NCADD), dies.

July 5, 1985 – AA gives Ruth Hock 5,000,000th Big Book during 50th AA Anniversary in Montreal, Canada.

July 5, 1990 – AA gives Nell Wing 10,000,000th Big Book during 55th AA Anniversary in Seattle, WA

July 2, 1993 – 50 years of AA celebrated in Canada.



Answering Service

Answering Service has three slots open; Monday 6-8 am & 8-10 am. Saturday 12-2 pm. Historically, Saturday 12 -2 pm is a busy slot for incoming calls and because its summer, a difficult slot to fill.

Volunteers are needed for the 12-step list. Areas in most need are Berlin, Camden, Hammonton, and Salem.

If you would like to be of service, please contact us at answeringservice@aasj.org or invite us to speak at your home group.

Steve M

Heho
JULY
this is your month to excel!

Hello Virus, It's me, Disease: Sobriety in the Season of Quarantine

On November 16th, 2019, I stumbled down those stairs to that church basement once again. It was my third time around. I had been sober for almost two years when I went out last time, but the chair with my name on it that I had earned was still there. I reeked of booze. My eyes and face were swollen from crying and drinking. I'm a geeky gay professor...and I couldn't think my way out of it. I was ashamed and grief-stricken.

"Hi, I'm Brent and I'm an alcoholic." "Hello Brent..." was the unabashed hug I had drunkenly forgotten to miss.

Thirty, sixty, ninety days passed...and I was feeling better. Certainly, I improved physically, but also emotionally and spiritually. I mostly kept my mouth shut and listened in meetings. I prayed every morning and every night. Something felt different this time. Maybe for me, as the Big Book says, when "...faced with alcoholic destruction, we soon became as open-minded on spiritual matters as we had tried to be on other questions. In this respect, alcohol was the great persuader. It finally beat us into a state of reasonableness" (Big Book, p. 48).

I went to meetings daily. I reconnected with my sponsor and was actively doing step work. I was happier than in my first two bouts in AA. My marriage improved. My job performance excelled. And the craving to drink... disappeared. And I timidly dared to think, "Did the miracle happen?"

In early Spring, I had heard of a SARS-like illness in China, which then lead to some quarantine-like lockdowns there. I didn't think much of it. And then news came news that the virus, COVID-19, had become a pandemic. And something inside me was triggered. I am a 48-year-old gay man who somehow survived the AIDS epidemic unlike so many of my brothers. News of this new virus' ease of transmission was fraught with uncertainty and fear. Jersey shut down and I was afraid.

I thrive on routine: wake up, pray, coffee, meeting, exercise, work, home, pray, sleep. Rinse and repeat. My sobriety was intact, but my routine was suddenly...just gone. My home group meeting shut down. My gym benched the weights. My college campus closed. But I was one of the lucky ones. Classes were moved online within a one week period (don't ask me what THAT was like). I could, in fact, work from home.

It's hard to describe what happened next. Alcohol is a subtle foe. My sobriety literally "*sbook*" like my hands during detox. My cravings came back with a barely checked ferocity. I wanted to drink again *so damn bad*. There were dozens of open liquor stores within a few miles of my home. Spring had sprung. My backyard was beautiful with

blossoms. Happy hour was just a drink away. I would write more about the longing I had in my head, but I don't want to romanticize the drink. Outside my home office, the virus stalked. Inside it, my disease whispered...and then began screaming like a Nazgul from Lord of the Rings (did I mention I was a geek?).

(Now...cue the theme to the sitcom "Maude.") *And then came Zoom...*

And here is where the Old Timers literally did my Higher Power's work. Using personal Zoom accounts, Old Timers rallied and suddenly meetings popped up everywhere and anytime—including my home group. As a professor, I use Zoom all the time. So, I latched onto them with a vice-like grip. And the Fellowship saved my life...again.

I zoomed. *Please take this obsession from me. Don't drink today.* I called my sponsor. I journaled. I zoomed. *Please take this obsession from me. Don't drink today.* I talked to recovery people. I played the tapes. I zoomed. *Please take this obsession from me. Don't drink today.* I zoomed.

It's said in the rooms that you can't think your way into a new way of living...you have to live your way into a new way of thinking. And one of my AA friends suggested, "you have to build your life so that it's easier not to use..."

So I joined recovery list services and social media groups. I read AA literature and fantasy novels. I went for walks with my husband. I exercised at home. I cleaned my closet. I binged on RuPaul and Harry Potter...and I grabbed my Nimbus 2000 and zoomed.

And I got out of myself. My students were suffering tremendously. Many were navigating life in quarantine in unsafe households, writing papers on their phones, struggling with childcare issues as well as coping with COVID-19 losses themselves. So I relaxed deadlines, held tutorial sessions, provided humorous videos, and sent a myriad of resources to those in dire need. I could help them **because I was sober.**

My sobriety settled, which is a relief. I'm a Jersey gurl, but I think I'll go to a meeting in lucky Ireland this afternoon. And I just celebrated 7 months, but I'm zooming just for today.

~Brent S.

