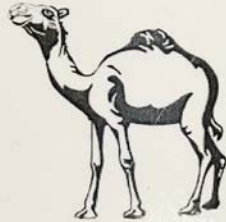


ANONYMOUS SOUTHJERSEY

SOUTH JERSEY INTERGROUP

March 2022



THE CAMEL STORY

*Dr. Bob would explain prayer
by telling how the camels in a caravan
would kneel down in the evening,
and the men would unload their burdens.
In the morning, they would kneel down again,
and the men would put the burdens back on.
"It's the same with prayer" Dr. Bob said.
"We get on our knees to unload at night.
And in the morning when we get on our knees again,
God gives us just the load we are able to carry for that day."
© 1980, Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers, page 229*

Progress, Not Perfection

We can't hit a bullseye every time. Sometimes we forget to heed the principles of these AA slogans, and that's okay—as long as we keep trying.

The best of all AA slogans. It certainly holds some weight, given that we hear it before every meeting. Unlike some of the other AA slogans, this originates from the text of *Alcoholics Anonymous* itself. Most meetings open with an excerpt from Chapter 5 ("[How It Works](#)") that contains this very

phrase. In this specific context, "How It Works" reminds us that we may never fully overcome our spiritual defects—but our [willingness](#) to try will elevate us to new heights.

In other words, don't beat yourself up every time you fail to maintain AA principles. Perhaps you forget one of the common AA slogans and begin intellectualizing your recovery or fretting over the future. This just makes you human.

We are not saints, let alone gods. Nobody can expect us to become perfect. We can, however, try to become better by working the [Twelve Steps](#) and attempting to adhere to various principles. Remember that the only true failure is giving up.

Keep your eyes on the enlightened path, and you can always continue moving in the right direction. Even if this, unfortunately, means taking a step backward every now and then.



SMASH IT!

The idea that somehow, someday they will control and enjoy their drinking is the great obsession of every abnormal drinker. The persistence of this illusion is astonishing. Many pursue it into the gates of insanity or death. We learned that we had to fully concede to our innermost selves that we were alcoholics. This is the first step in recovery. The delusion that we are like other people, or presently may be, has to be smashed...

BB pg 30

That sentence doesn't say that idea must be blocked or discarded. It doesn't say it must be modified or re-thought. It says that notion **MUST BE SMASHED**. And that is exactly right for this alcoholic. I had to completely smash that idea. Ignoring it or avoiding it wasn't going to work. Trying to think of something else wasn't going to work. The only chance I had was to imagine myself literally smashing that idea into dust.

Rand In New Orleans

I was headed to a meeting in my old stomping grounds of New Orleans. I had been to college there and had ridden the Trolley Car from Loyola University down St.

Charles Avenue to the French Quarter MANY times. Now I was riding it on the way to a meeting.

I had returned to New Orleans after many years, for a long weekend and a class reunion. I had awakened early that Saturday morning and called the AA Hotline in N.O. and asked about meetings. The man who answered was a pleasant fellow and he gave me a whole selection of meetings that happened at different times that day in the "Uptown" Neighborhood where the University sits. But I had also asked if there were any "Downtown" in the French Quarter. He said yes, but it was very hard to find. I said, no problem, I knew the Quarter well and was sure I would find it. It was in the afternoon at around 2:30 and it was held in a Classroom in a Catholic School.

So, off I went. The Trolley car was very crowded when I got on but I found a standing spot right about in the middle of the Car. I reached up and grabbed the leather Strap to hold on to and off we went. It was a gorgeous sunny day and hot. Hot and Humid just like I remembered in the Spring in New Orleans. But the flowers were in full bloom and the smell of Bougainvillea and Honeysuckle wafted through the Trolley car as we travelled down the tracks. ALL the windows were open, of course, and it was just a delightful ride. I was filled with anticipation to find out what an AA meeting in the Quarter would be

like. Would it be big? small? Step Meeting?
It was a pleasant ride.

As we reached Downtown, before the French Quarter, at Lee Circle, we stopped to discharge some passengers and take some on. As I turned watch the exchange, a guy about my age came tumbling through the crowd and grabbed the leather strap right next to mine. He was in very sorry looking shape, appeared to be homeless, had a very powerful aroma to him, including the distinct smell of alcohol. Whiskey I surmised. And I thought two things, "Hmmm, is that yesterday's whiskey, or today's?" while I was simultaneously thinking "Why did this guy just happen to stumble up to me?" Well, my Higher Power soon gave me a really good clue! I soon found that my Higher Power had put me in exactly the right spot and had served me up an excellent service opportunity.

The fellow had grabbed the hanging strap next to mine, was swinging himself around seemingly trying to get his feet underneath himself, when he swung around a bit toward me, and declared to no one in particular: "aarrrrggghh" he said, "one of these days I gotta get myself to a meeting!" So! I turned and gave him a quick once over, and said, "Gee, do you happen to mean an AA Meeting??" He had a quick look of surprise and immediately blurted out, "Yes!". So, I promptly said to him: "Well, this just MIGHT be your lucky day!

Because I, myself am actually going to an AA Meeting, RIGHT NOW! I mean, I am actually on my way to one!" With an even BIGGER look of astonishment, he blurted out, "well, can I come?" So, naturally, I said "well, SURE you can!" Well, he was thrilled! I think he realized that he had kind of stumbled onto pay dirt. Here was a guy who already knew where one was, and he was going there anyway, so he could walk in with me, when we got there! I asked his name and he said "Rand"

It was just about at that time, that we Reached Canal Street, opposite Bourbon Street, where the Trolley Car would turn and make its way back Uptown. So, we disembarked, walked across the Street and entered the French Quarter.

We walked up Bourbon Street and Rand greeted several people including a couple of fellas sitting on the curb, with their feet in the street. Rand declared: "I'm Going to an AA Meeting! This guy is taking Me!" He also stopped into a tiny bar along Bourbon St, not much bigger than a Broom Closet, and told the Barmaid: "I'm Going to AA! This guy is taking me! We're going to an AA meeting!" She looked over at me, gave me a little nod, and said: "Wow, Rand, that sounds like a good idea!" Now, I didn't think it was such a great idea telling that to everyone as we were walking down Bourbon Street! But that's what he did!

We walked several more blocks and I told

Rand what street we were looking for and the name of the Catholic School where the Meeting was. He declared "No problem.... I know exactly where it is" and he did. Which was a good thing because I had forgotten that, once you are off Bourbon, Chartres, and Royal Streets, which is where the Bars, Shops, Art Galleries are, the rest of the Quarter looks like an abandoned neighborhood filled with dilapidated dingy, seemingly empty buildings.

As we walked along it dawned on me that it was actually, MY lucky Day. I had long forgotten how the French Quarter, once a person has turned off of Bourbon, Royal or Chartres Streets, it becomes just a dreary looking place, devoid of any signage or "landmarks" and it can be really hard to find the building you are looking for. Every street-corner looks the same. And here I was with Rand, and he knew the Quarter like the back of his hand. We soon found (he soon found!) the Little Catholic church and school from which AA was renting its meeting space. Up the stairs we went, across the Balcony, and into the little classroom where we were greeted by the locals and made to feel right at home! Just like any other AA meeting we find, while trudging the road of happy destiny!

I passed Rand off to the good people in that meeting, knowing that if he decided to keep coming back, they would take good care of him.

Tradition Three: *The only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking.*

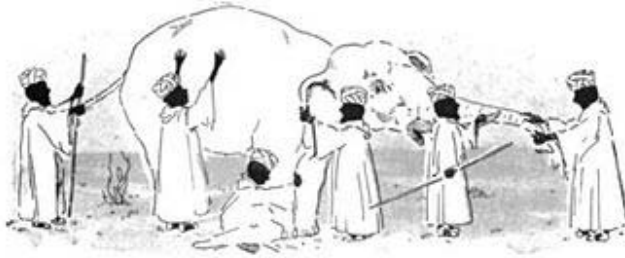
- In my mind, do I prejudge some new AA members as losers?
- Is there some kind of alcoholic whom I privately do not want in my AA group?
- Do I set myself up as a judge of whether a newcomer is sincere or phony?
- Do I let language, religion (or lack of it), race, education, age, sexuality, or other such things interfere with my carrying the message?
- Am I over impressed by a celebrity? By a doctor, a clergyman, and ex-convict? Or can I just treat this new member simply and naturally as one more sick human, like the rest of us?
- When someone turns up at AA needing information or help (even if he can't ask for it aloud), does it really matter to me what he does for a living? Where he lives? What his domestic arrangements are? Whether he had been to AA before? What his other problems are?

Dear Newcomer,

There's a saying in AA: "Don't Leave Before the Miracle Happens" The simplest way to explain this would be take the action AA teaches that produce "A New Pair of Glasses!" or if you like a new better way of looking at life.

A Longer and more complex explanation says the same thing;

[The Blind Men and the Elephant](#)



IT was six men of Indostan
To learning much inclined,
Who went to see the Elephant
(Though all of them were blind),
That each by observation
Might satisfy his mind.

The *First* approached the Elephant,
And happening to fall
Against his broad and sturdy side,
At once began to bawl:
"God bless me!—but the Elephant
Is very like a wall!"

The *Second*, feeling of the tusk,
Cried: "Ho!—what have we here
So very round and smooth and sharp?
To me 't is mighty clear
This wonder of an Elephant
Is very like a spear!"

The *Third* approached the animal,
And happening to take
The squirming trunk within his hands,
Thus boldly up and spoke:
"I see," said he, "the Elephant
Is very like a snake!"

The *Fourth* reached out his eager hand,
And felt about the knee.

"What most this wondrous beast is like
Is mighty plain," ooh he;
"It is clear enough the Elephant
Is very like a tree!"

The *Fifth*, who chanced to touch the ear,
Said: "Even the blindest man
Can tell what this resembles most;
Deny the fact who can,
This marvel of an Elephant
Is very like a fan!"

The *Sixth* no sooner had begun
About the beast to grope,
Than, seizing on the swinging tail
That fell within his scope,
"I see," Oh he, "the Elephant
Is very like a rope!"

And so these men of Indostan
Disputed loud and long,
Each in his own opinion
Exceeding stiff and strong,
Though each was partly in the right,
And all were in the wrong!

Just like these men, so often we think we know something when we arrive at AA but all we really know is the faulty thinking we arrived with. And as far as our knowledge of AA, well this writer has been an active member for 24 years and each year I gain a wider understanding of how much more of AA I have yet to see, understand and appreciate.

In fact, so it is with life. The first step calls for surrender because we have to open ourselves to the possibility that others may have a viewpoint to help us find 'a way up and out'.

CONTACT INFO FOR SJ INTERGROUP:

South Jersey Intergroup Association, Inc.
PO Box 2514, Cherry Hill, NJ 08035
Office / Literature Sales: 1-856-486-4446
Email: Info@asj.org, Website: www.asj.org

24-Hour Hotline: 856-486-4444

Announcements & Things to do

Stories Needed

Archives is looking to continue collecting information and stories about our South Jersey groups and individuals. If interested, please email archives at archives@aasj.org.

Personal Histories, Homegroup Histories, COVID Adaptation Stories!

12-step list: Please continue to remind everyone that more volunteers are need for the 12-step list. We have a signup sheets available for anyone wishing to take a copy to their home groups. Please contact the Answering service committee for more details. If you know anyone who would like to be of service, please have them contact us at answering-service@aasj.org.

Public Information: Public Information is ALWAYS looking for help so please email publicinfo@aasj.org if anyone would like to do service.

The Maple Shade Reflections Group will now meet Thursdays 7-8 PM.

Area 45 Mini Conference (hybrid)

- Sunday, April 3, 2022 9:00 - NOON
- Ocean Acres Community Center
- 489 Nautilus Drive, Manahawkin, [\(map\) Google Calendar](#) [ICS](#)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89642028702?pwd=OHhnbzJacmQ3U1o1aVpTaFJyRTJ3Zz09> Meeting ID: 896 4202 8702

Passcode: Mini72

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 Intergruop.

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.

Please send submissions to newsletter@aasj.org.

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 See AASJ.org for up to date zoom info




Saturday Mens Early Risers
15th Anniversary Celebration

Saturday April 16th 2022 7AM Speaker Meeting
Light Breakfast to follow Questions? Text Pat M 609 498 5458

Anne O ALG

ALL ARE WELCOME!
Fellowship Community Church
710 Collings Avenue
Collingswood, NJ



56th Area 45 Southern New Jersey General Service Convention
March 18-19-20, 2022

3h Person Sometimes Quickly Sometimes Slowly Virtual (Key Events only)

CHECKLIST

- Register for Convention
- Order Meals, cutoff 3/11/22
- Make Hotel Reservation
- Decide what to wear to - "Roaring 20's Banquet & Dance"
- Selfie Stations
- Karaoke
- Pre-Order Merchandise

SIGN-UP

- AA's Got Talent (Open Mic)
- Lead a Marathon Meeting

The Claridge Hotel
123 S. Indiana Ave
Atlantic City, NJ

<https://area45convention.org/>
See website for information, sign ups, events, activities, etc