

ANONYMOUS

SJ INTERGROUP has a new Office!

**1000 White Horse Rd #702
Voorhees Township, NJ**



Yoo-Hoo!

**Has Anybody
Seen My
Sanity?**

GIRLS LIKE BAD BOYS

A girl gets herself all dressed to the 9s and goes out on a blind date. Halfway through the meal her date grabs all the tableware and pockets it. When they call the cops, he then grabs her hand and they make a dash for it. After running out of breath, stumbling and getting scaped up while loosing her high-heels- they get arrested. Many hours and humiliations later she finds her own way home. When she wakes in the morning, she thinks to herself- **THAT WAS ABSOLUTELY AWFUL, I CAN'T WAIT TO DO IT AGAIN.!**

That's what my drinking was like-

How was yours?

South Jersey Intergroup Announcements

If you have anything you would like to share - send it to NEWSLETTER@AASJ.ORG

Fri. Feb 23 7:30pm Audubon Friday Night Anniv., Logan Memorial Church, 18 W. Merchant St.

Thur. Feb 29 7-9pm, Millville Group, 77th Anniv., EATING Speaker Meeting, 1st United Methodist, 201 N. 2nd & Pine St.

Sat, Mar 2, 9am, Sicklerville Morning BB 22nd Anniv, St. Charles Borromeo, 176 Stagecoach Rd.

Sat. Mar 9, 10:00am - 12:00pm Voorhees Answering Service/Hotline Meeting & Training, SJ Intergroup Office: 1000 White Horse Rd #702, All are welcome to join for food, fellowship and information. Come meet others and learn how to better serve this worthwhile committee.

Wed. March 20, 8:00pm, Cherry Hill, SJ Intergroup Meeting: St. Bartholomew's Church, 1989 Rt. 70 E (Marlton Pike East), See AASJ.org for Zoom Meeting info.

Wed. March 20 6 – 8pm Atco Women of Grace 33rd Anniv., 2259 Atco Ave., (Presbyterian Church) Appetizers and desserts. A great speaker! Women only!

Tues. Apr 9 7:30pm Port Norris, BUCKSHUTEM Anniv. Living Waters Fellowship, 1151 North Ave.

FELLOWSHIP EVENTS & AA EVENTS OUTSIDE SJ INTERGROUP

Feb.22- 25 NERAASA, Hershey, Pa. Lodge 75, Scholarships snjaa.org, Cary K: 845.490.3292

Sat. Feb 24, 5pm – 8pm, Sewell, Kiss Club Spaghetti Dinner, 1962 Delsea Dr., Live Music

Mar. 8-10 Cape May SEPIA Round-Up, 1045 Beach Ave. <https://store.aasepia.org/2024-round-up/>

Mar 15-17, Atlantic City 58th Area 45 Convention, Claridge Hotel, www.area45convention.org

Mon. Mar 18, 6:30pm Haddon Heights ALANON Monday Serenity 21st Anniv., 704 Garden St.

INSIDE OUR FEBRUARY-MARCH ISSUE

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Answering Service 12-step list: More volunteers are needed for the 12-step list. Signup sheets available for anyone wishing to take a copy to their home groups. Contact the Answering service. answeringservice@aasj.org.

SUGGESTION BOX

Tells us your Ideas- How can we make SJ Intergroup serve the Groups even better?



What is the purpose of Step 2 in AA?

The purpose of step 2 is to give AAs hope and let them know they are not alone, that something greater than ourselves can help us to recover from a seemingly hopeless state.

It means a restoration to sanity & freedom.

The second step isn't concerned with our own definition of our higher-power, but on what that power can do for us.

GOD, I OFFER MYSELF TO THEE -
TO BUILD WITH ME AND DO WITH
ME AS THOU WILT. RELIEVE ME
OF THE BONDAGE OF SELF, THAT
I MAY BETTER DO THY WILL.
TAKE AWAY MY DIFFICULTIES,
THAT VICTORY OVER THEM MAY
BEAR WITNESS TO THOSE I
WOULD HELP OF THY POWER,
THY LOVE AND THY WAY OF
LIFE. MAY I DO THY WILL
ALWAYS!

RULE 62- Just for laughs

A guy wants a divorce. He tells the judge "I can't take it anymore she's out going from bar to bar every night way past midnight" The judge responds "what's she doing" The guy says "looking for me."

My sponsor told me to stay away from places where I used to drink I just sold my car.

AA meeting: "Hi I'm Chad and I've been sober for forty days"

"Not in a row or anything crazy, just total."

A scientist walks into an AA meeting. "I've just invented a cure for alcoholism! Take one of these pills and you'll never be a problem drinker again!"

An attendee replies: "What happens if you take two?"

"Hi my name is Jeff and I'm an alcoholic."

"Sir, this is AAA, not AA."

"I know, I'm trying to explain why my car is in the lake."

Harrison Ford just turned up at my AA group.

I've never seen Han so low.

So I was kicked out of AA the other day... Apparently saying "you miss 100% of the shots you don't take" wasn't appropriate.

An alcoholic is sitting at a bar. He orders two shots. He proceeds to pour out the first one all over the bar, downs the second one and then orders two more. He pours out the first one on the bar, downs the second one and orders two more.

The bartender asks him why he keeps pouring out the first shot all over the bar.

The alcoholic replies with "My AA group said all I need to do is avoid that first drink."

Trivia Question

Where will you find the words;
*"Courtesy, kindness, justice, and love are the keynotes by which we may come into harmony with practically anybody. When in doubt we can always pause, saying,
"Not my will, but Thine, be done."
we can often ask ourselves, "Am I doing to others as I would have them do to me today?""*
(Answer is in this issue)



TRADITION THREE (LONG FORM)

Our membership ought to include all who suffer from alcoholism. Hence we may refuse none who wish to recover. Nor ought A.A. membership ever depend upon money or conformity.

Any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an A.A. group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation.

**IN AA, WE
DON'T SHOOT
OUR WOUNDED**

MIKE T.



NJYPAA
New Jersey Young People of Alcoholics Anonymous

BUSINESS MEETING

THIRD SUNDAY OF EVERY MONTH
10:30 AM

ZOOM MEETING ID:
264-995-272
PASSWORD: service

3525 Quakerbridge Rd.
#5000
Hamilton, NJ 08619



BTG is looking for volunteers!

Bridging the Gap is a 12 Step commitment designed to help the individual make the transition from the treatment or correction facility to Alcoholics Anonymous. The temporary contact would be responsible to meet/take the new member to 6 meetings to help them learn about our fellowship.

What Bridging the Gap suggests of the temporary contact:

- AAs who participate should have 1 year of continuous sobriety.
- AAs are asked to meet/take the individual to a minimum of 6 meetings.
- AAs should share their experience with sponsorship, a home group, and the 12 steps.
- An AA's commitment to the BTG program is a minimum of 1-year.
- Bridging the Gap volunteers are encouraged to attend workshops for questions, training and ongoing support.



If you would like to help...

Grab a pamphlet and fill out the back form. Take a pic and send it via email. Please include your home group. Or Scan the QR Code below fill out and submit. It's that easy. Contact Scott P.- Area 45 Bridging the Gap Coordinator

Email - Bridgingthegap@snjaa.org



WHERE DID THIS INSANE BIT COME IN?

Step 2 - We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

"We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity." This was an extremely easy Step for me the first time around. I just said, "I believe that God can restore me to sanity." That was it--no fanfare, no shouting, no horns.

How ignorant of the Second Step I was. I had no inner feeling of acceptance and no real belief of any kind. Who said I was crazy in the first place? All I admitted was that I was powerless over alcohol and that my life had become unmanageable, and I wasn't totally convinced of that. My powerlessness over drink was a statement that I was forced to make, not one that I really believed. On the other hand, a brief review of my life--the loss of my medical license and the loss of my worldly goods, including my home and cars--convinced me that my life was unmanageable. But was that because I was powerless over alcohol? And where did this insane bit come in?

I got my money's worth out of my sponsor. Sean showed me that there were a few faults in my thinking, like my denying the reality of my situation and my projecting the causes of my problems onto others rather than admitting that I was the source of them. He pointed out that these were mechanisms used by the mentally ill and suggested perhaps that was why I was using them. Sean also said that if it was too hard to admit I was powerless over alcohol, I could assume I was powerless over my emotions and that is why I drank.

Okay, now we were getting somewhere. I could admit that I was powerless over my emotions without having an attack of shame. This allowed me to say that my emotions were the cause of my drinking; therefore, I wasn't powerless over alcohol or insane. (Answer to Trivia Question; 12 & 12 Step 10, Pg. 93). Just a little more self-control over my thoughts was in order.

Son of a gun, it was months later before I saw that when I said I drank because I was powerless over my emotions I was actually saying I was powerless over alcohol. I finally started to believe it.

Sean pointed out that rationalization was a prominent part of my personality as well, and as the Big Book says, "Rationalization is giving socially acceptable reasons for socially unacceptable behavior, and socially unacceptable behavior is a form of insanity." Sean had me now. I admitted that my life was unmanageable and that I probably was powerless over alcohol. However, it still took many more months for me to truly believe in the latter.

The Second Step I just breezed through. I said it out loud, and that was that. Somehow, I felt that I was getting away with something, though. How could my sponsor put up such a fight about the First Step and just let the Second slip by? Ignorance is bliss, and I sure was in the market for some bliss.

Now I suspect Sean didn't put up a fuss because he wanted to avoid an argument over God or a Higher Power. The Third Step was going to be tough enough without getting into a free-for-all over Step Two. I had a great deal of difficulty with the acceptance of a Higher Power. In my mind, I confused God and/or a Higher Power with religion. I couldn't accept that of all the religions in the world, only one was right and the others wrong. I also thought that if I didn't believe in a God, I couldn't be a bad person who broke God's rules. (I didn't know then that I was not being bad, just sick.)

When I first went to AA, I was in pretty sorry emotional shape. I had used mood-altering chemicals and alcohol to try to survive the awful way my life was going. Now, when I was told that I couldn't drink or drug anymore, I didn't think that life was worthwhile. How could I tolerate the agonies I had to endure?

At AA meetings, I did see that sober people seemed to be calm and happy. I didn't know what they were taking, but obviously it was working. I wanted some of it, and if going to meetings was what it took to feel better, then that is what I would do. My way wasn't working anymore. I was ready to try their way.

I went to one hundred meetings in ninety days. My life centered on them. I listened, read the Big Book, and talked to my sponsor and many other people about what they thought was helping them. I discovered serenity in those meetings, and I started to feel moments of peace and calm. Something was happening. Some of the Promises seemed to be coming true.

Every day I commuted thirty miles to work. One morning, while mulling over the inequities of life, I finally said to myself, "Okay, I'll try it. God, you take my worries; I can't handle

them. I am only human, and I am not perfect. You, on the other hand, are not human and you can tolerate this stress. You handle my life. I leave the results and the what-ifs to you." Immediately, I felt peace and serenity flood over me. I was overwhelmed and thrilled by the results. I told myself, "How simple taking the Third Step really is. I just tell my Higher Power to take over because I can't do it anymore."

Although I had made it hard, the concept was simple. I had achieved serenity by turning my life and will over to the care of my Higher Power. I had started my path to sobriety, which I defined as the state of not being drunk--in other words, a state of mental and emotional balance.

It took three more years of working my program to realize that my acceptance of a Higher Power has been the single most important thing in restoring my sanity. This was the only thing that has allowed me not to dwell on what might be but to live my life for this minute, not to catastrophize but to enjoy life without fear. Acceptance of a God restored me to sanity.

FRIENDS of the FELLOWSHIP
RECOVERY BOWLING LEAGUE
2024
Westbrook Lanes \$15 a week
Sunday nights per bowler
@6:30PM includes shoe rental
Starting February 18th
MORE INFO: JOHN C. @ 856-693-2866
OR JR @ 856-993-2151



12 TRADITIONS (From the 12 Traditions Illustrated)

Tradition 2: For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.

1. Do I criticize or do I trust and support my group officers, AA committees, and office workers? Newcomers? Old-timers?
2. Am I absolutely trustworthy, even in secret, with AA Twelfth Step jobs or other AA responsibility?

3. Do I look for credit in my AA jobs? Praise for my AA ideas?
4. Do I have to save face in group discussion, or can I yield in good spirit to the group conscience and work cheerfully along with it?
5. Although I have been sober a few years, am I still willing to serve my turn at AA chores?
6. In group discussions, do I sound off about matters on which I have no experience and little knowledge?

Tradition 3: The only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking.

1. In my mind, do I prejudge some new AA members as losers?
2. Is there some kind of alcoholic whom I privately do not want in my AA group?
3. Do I set myself up as a judge of whether a newcomer is sincere or phony?
4. Do I let language, religion (or lack of it), race, education, age, or other such things interfere with my carrying the message?
5. Am I over-impressed by a celebrity? By a doctor, a clergyman, an ex-convict? Or can I just treat this new member simply and naturally as one more sick human, like the rest of us?
6. 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?

Person: What's it like partying with you?

Me: Well, it's a bit like a merry-go-round...

Person: Oh that sounds fun!

Me: I'm not finished...



Choices made in anger cannot be undone!!



DOING VERSUS DEBATING

ON a recent Twelfth Step call, I found myself arguing with a man who wanted sobriety, he said, but seemed driven to debate about various principles of AA which I tried to explain. It disturbed me for a moment, but only for a moment, and I felt impelled to say:

"Just a minute, now. I don't mean to offend you, or make any cruel comparisons, but there is no point in all our argument and analysis of theoretical things. You have told me you want to stay sober, but can't do it.

Once I was in the same boat. I'm only trying to tell you how I changed all that and managed to go without a drink for a little more than three years.

You say I'm all wrong, and the program can't work. Okay. I'm wrong; a million other drunks who were once exactly like you, or worse, are also wrong. You win. I might as well be going now. AA doesn't work. It can't work. You are sure of it.

"But if you don't mind, I'll just go on in my foolish notion that it *does* work. Goodbye and. . ."

"Hey, wait," he said, "come back here. . ."

I don't mean to brag of course, but it makes a long story short to say he's been doing pretty well for the past three weeks--the longest time he's been sober in more than ten years.

It's an old idea in AA, but I was struck by the thought that we do waste a good deal of time analyzing the program and ourselves, perhaps. Emphasize *perhaps*, and don't think I'm putting a knock on moral inventories, either.

But I know my tendency is to seek the cause of things, the whys and wherefores. It's all right, as long as I remember it isn't necessary and don't get frustrated about it. Regardless of anything, the big *fact* is: AA functions.

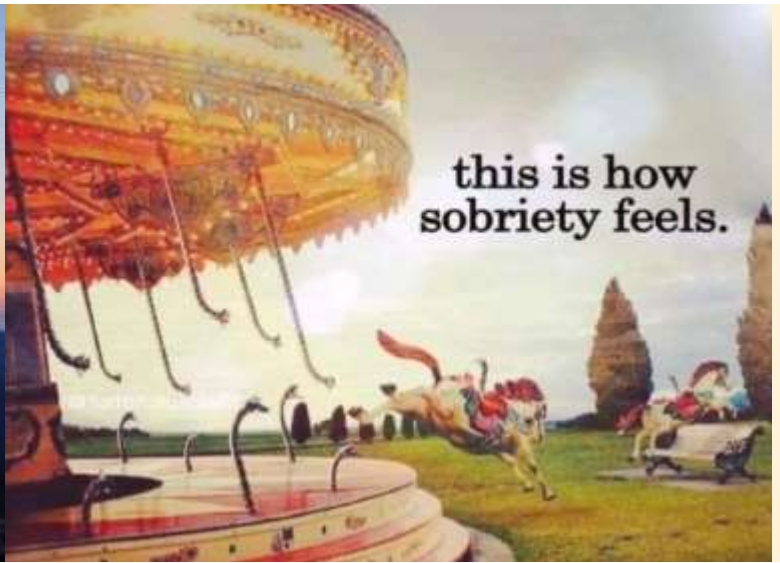
In the fellowship we have something to DO. If we do it, we're pretty sure to be all right.

Still not bragging, one thing I consciously tried to do when I came into AA was *not* jump to conclusions. I owe it to my sponsor, who said I should go to twenty meetings before I made up my mind about anything, either for or against AA. I'll always be grateful to him, because nothing he said appealed to me quite as much as that. I wanted sobriety, sure. But I didn't want to be sold a bill of goods, either.

Naturally, after twenty meetings and a couple of weeks of day-by-day sobriety, there was some essential stability got into me. It seemed to come from outside and to have got inside of me, somehow. Whatever put that stability there and has since made it seem to grow, I call the Higher Power. Now, I find the things I did at first because I was told they'd work are the things I *want* to do.

Strength doesn't come from what you can do. It comes from **overcoming** the things you once thought you **couldn't**.

Stikki Rogers



this is how
sobriety feels.

CONCEPTS CHECKLIST

A service piece for home groups, districts, areas

Some of these discussion points were originally developed by an A.A. group and further developed by the trustees' Literature Committee to be distributed by the General Service Office. While this checklist is intended as a starting point for discussion by groups, districts or areas, individual A.A. members may find it useful along with our co-founder Bill W.'s writings, a service sponsor if you have one and reflection on your own service experience. Additional information about the Concepts can be found in The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service and "The Twelve Concepts Illustrated" - pamphlet. (The Concepts stated here are in the short form.)

Concept II: The General Service Conference of A.A. has become, for nearly every practical purpose, the active voice and the effective conscience of our whole Society in its world affairs.

- Do we have an understanding of the history of the General Service Conference (the "Conference")?
- What is a Conference Advisory Action? Does our home group's G.S.R., D.C.M., area delegate report back to the group on the highlights of the Conference and Conference Advisory Actions?
- Is our group meeting its wider Seventh Tradition responsibilities?

Concept III: To insure effective leadership, we should endow each element of A.A.—the Conference, the General Service Board and its service corporations, staffs, committees, and executives—with a traditional "Right of Decision."

- Do we understand what is meant by the "Right of Decision"? Do we grant it at all levels of service or do we "instruct"?
- Do we trust our trusted servants — G.S.R., D.C.M., area delegate, the Conference itself?



“
Sobriety was the
greatest gift I ever
gave myself.

Rob Lowe

Our boss just banned overly specific nicknames and the whole office is staring at Rat Snitch Brian The Good Time Ruiner.

Don't bother walking a mile in my shoes, that would be boring. Spend 30 seconds in my head, that'll freak you right out.

Life will change without our permission. It's our attitude that will determine the ride.

“ You have to see failure as the beginning and the middle, but never entertain it as an end.”

— Robert Downey Jr.

The lemon Tree

A homeowner looks out his back window and admired his ripe lemon tree. As he does so he notices one leaf turning brown, so he goes in his garage and gets a ladder, climbs it and waters the leaf. The next day he spots another and repeats the process, the next day 2 leaves are turning and again he drags out the ladder, climbs to the top and waters the leaves. By the end of the week he can't keep up, as so many leaves are turning and his efforts are useless.

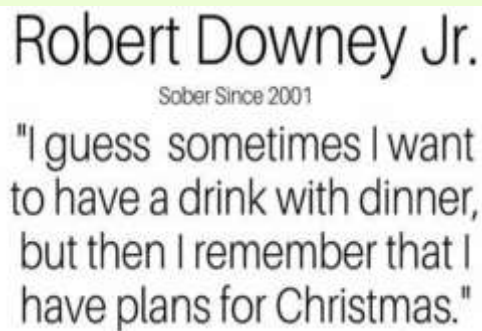
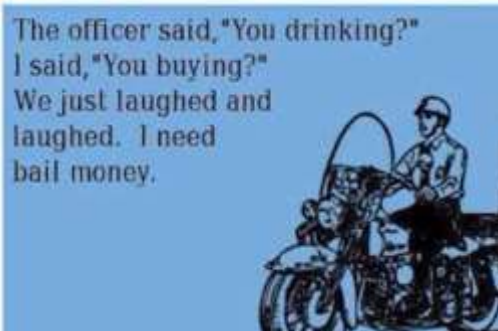
Just then an AA elder was walking by and spots him frantically moving the ladder and pouring water on the leaves. The elder says to him; you've got to water the trunk. He argues; there's nothing wrong with the trunk. The AA elder waits patiently as the leaves continue to brown until in complete surrender the homeowner finally waters the trunk in blind faith and miraculously the leaves green back up.

And so it is with us, we get caught up in the many issues of life never realizing there is a deeper problem requiring a deeper solution. I have to recall, if my way worked, what am I doing here? Powerless means we can't find the solution on our own. We have to sink pretty low before we're willing to admit it. The second and just as important step after we admit we don't have the power- is to find the power. Following the AA way always starts as a form of blind faith- it seems to work for you, I hope it works for me too. Once we see our leaves miraculously turning green we receive the unshakable foundation for life. We need

no further proof. This process when practiced unwinds the awful inner dialogue and improved my relationship with myself.

Relieved of the Bondage of self is a wonderful thing but it must be practiced One Day at a Time. I for one gained a prayer life as a result of this miracle of transformation. All was well, until I didn't. It's my experience that over some time, I unwound the progress I made. Until finally when all scorecards read zero yet again, I drank. I was unable to get sober for another 10 years.

Finally, I surrendered again and received this unmerited gift. The difference between then and now is I don't know if today's level of effort will keep me sober tomorrow. I have to be actively seeking ways to turn up my effort. So in the end, will I become more spiritual in God's eyes? Who can say, and who cares? All this effort may not move the needle forward at all but I trust it will ward off backsliding from maintaining my daily reprieve.



Disconnection

I was woken up at 4:30am this morning in a bad head. This may sound worrisome to some but we all have our own walk and this is mine. I've been told we awake with untreated alcoholism every day. What is important is what we do with it. At moments like these, I'll spend a few minutes to go through my long list of regrets and loathing. But after years of imperfectly moving forward in the program, I know to give it to God, get up and give my day a better start. To lay in misery with these thoughts would be a waste. Any AA who has hit a bottom or two knows all about this misery.

As I lay there, I started to change my thinking. I started thinking about those that can't escape these moments and stew endlessly. Taken to the extreme, I thought about how a person might suddenly kill themselves when they seem to have very few problems or an AA member with 30 some successful years of sobriety would suddenly return to drinking. Maybe it's not as sudden as it appears.

A good old timer I know confided in me that he feels “expendable.” That is a tough word to hear from someone you highly respect but I thank them for sharing it with me. People with time like to focus on the positive while in a meeting so we can encourage a new member to hold on- it gets better. We do that because it does- but I don’t care if a person has less than 24 hours or if they have 65 years of sobriety we never rise above being a human being. That’s not what AA is trying to sell you on. What we’re trying to get you to buy is stated in the 12th step

“Service, gladly rendered, obligations squarely met, troubles well accepted or solved with God’s help, the knowledge that at home or in the world outside we are partners in a common effort, the well-understood fact that in God’s sight all human beings are important, the proof that love freely given surely brings a full return, the certainty that we are no longer isolated and alone in self-constructed prisons, the surety that we need no longer be square pegs in round holes but can fit and belong in God’s scheme of things—these are the permanent and legitimate satisfactions of right living for which no amount of pomp and circumstance, no heap of material possessions, could possibly be substitutes.”

Thankfully, my head problems aren’t nearly as severe these days as feeling ‘expendable’ but hearing that word stuck with me. I wondered if it were me- what might be the fundamental problem. I’m not 80 years old yet so to write judgmentally of someone else is not the point- I may have that feeling when I’m that age, I don’t know. Still I wonder- is it disconnection? I could simplify and say its disconnection from God. This is true however; God has given us a world full of people so we can better connect. The late John K. often would often quote the Came to Believe book that sums up the problem and the solution;

““I sought my soul, but my soul I could not see. I sought my God, but my God eluded me. I sought my brother, and I found all three.” We find our brothers and sisters in the Fellowship, and therein lies spiritual strength. Your understanding of God may be quite different from mine, but we may agree, I think, that there is a Holy Spirit pervading A.A. meetings and that the sobriety of each and every one of us is evidence of a miracle. A miracle is defined as an event that appears unexplainable and so is held to be supernatural in origin—an act of God. This I accept. David Stewart has written: “A miracle is an astonishing action, emerging from the concerted effort of God and a person.” I agree—and in A.A. “a person” becomes many people. A.A. succeeds because, one and all, we have a common goal toward which we are working: mental, emotional, and spiritual growth, through love and service. Once we come to believe, we are given the opportunity to work toward this goal.”

It doesn't matter how far off the beam you are the 12 step program of recovery is a way of life we voluntarily train ourselves to live by. First because we have to, and later because we want to. However when off the beam, we remind ourselves that it works if we work it. Rather than stumble through an explanation, I'll let the same author share the preceding paragraph to the quote above:

“When I returned to A.A., its precepts seemed entirely new to me, particularly the full meaning of the First Step, the “atom bomb of the program.” Instead of taking the Steps and forgetting them, this time I began living them daily, finding new meaning in each one. What I have come to believe is profound, and my concept and understanding of the program are quite different from what they were before. My A.A. way of life now demands constant action—an active self-honesty and recognition of the necessity for living in day-tight compartments. Patience must be practiced. In gratitude, I must humbly come to believe every moment of every day. Each day, I must surrender and rededicate my life, or I shall lose all that I have gained, I have always believed in God, but I must never again forget how easy it is to lose contact & become again “unsane.””

That sounds like a tall order however this quote from the Big Book is something we hear at every meeting:

“Many of us exclaimed, “What an order! I can't go through with it.” Do not be discouraged. No one among us has been able to maintain anything like perfect adherence to these principles. We are not saints. The point is, that we are willing to grow along spiritual lines. The principles we have set down are guides to progress. We claim spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection.”

It's of interest to point out that that the above paragraph follows the 12th Step. Actually, it applies to all the Steps but the 12th Step is the icing on the cake. In it we have 3 sections:

(1)Having had a Spiritual Awakening as the result of these steps; (2) we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, (3) and to practice these principles in all our affairs.”

(1)What a wonderful teaching it is. When I was brand new I felt dead on the inside but even then “Having had a Spiritual Awakening as the result of these steps” excited me about the possibilities this new life may offer. The Big Book defines Spiritual Awakening as;

“the personality change sufficient to bring about recovery from alcoholism has manifested itself among us in many different forms.....With few exceptions our members find that they have tapped an unsuspected inner resource which they presently identify with their own conception of a Power greater than themselves.”

(2)As for ‘we tried to carry this message to alcoholics’, The Big Book has a whole Chapter dedicated to ‘Working with Others’ which starts;

“Practical experience shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics. It works when other activities fail. This is our twelfth suggestion: Carry this message to other alcoholics! You can help when no one else can. You can secure their confidence when others fail. Remember they are very ill. Life will take on new meaning. To watch people recover, to see them help others, to watch loneliness vanish, to see a fellowship grow up about you, to have a host of friends—this is an experience you must not miss. We know you will not want to miss it. Frequent contact with newcomers and with each other is the bright spot of our lives.”

(3)And finally, what seems like the tallest order of them all; ‘and to practice these principles in all our affairs.’ I believe- this isn’t an order at all, it’s a consequence of getting all the steps that preceded it into practice. However, I woke up this morning cycling through my list of emotional pains and embarrassments. What about that? Our 12 and 12 addresses that too:

“Of course all A.A. ’s, even the best, fall far short of such achievements as a consistent thing. Without necessarily taking that first drink, we often get quite far off the beam... We temporarily cease to grow because we feel satisfied that there is no need for all of A.A. ’s Twelve Steps for us. We are doing fine on a few of them

.... Sooner or later the pink cloud stage wears off and things go disappointingly dull. We begin to think that A.A. doesn’t pay off after all. We become puzzled and discouraged...

Our answer is in still more spiritual development. Only by this means can we improve our chances for really happy and useful living. And as we grow spiritually, we find that our old attitudes toward our instincts need to undergo drastic revisions. Our desires for emotional security and wealth, for personal prestige and power, for romance, and for family satisfactions—all these have to be tempered and redirected. We have learned that the satisfaction of instincts cannot be the sole end and aim of our lives. If we place instincts first, we have got the cart before the horse; we shall be pulled backward into disillusionment. But when we are willing to place spiritual growth first—then and only then do we have a real chance.

.... This new outlook was, we learned, something especially necessary to us alcoholics. For alcoholism had been a lonely business, even though we had been surrounded by people who loved us...

Through AA we begin to learn right relations with people who understand us; we don't have to be alone any more... When, with God's help, we calmly accepted our lot, then we found we could live at peace with ourselves and show others who still suffered the same fears that they could get over them, too. We found that freedom from fear was more important than freedom from want.

....We have been considering so many problems that it may appear that A.A. consists mainly of racking dilemmas and troubleshooting. To a certain extent, that is true. We have been talking about problems because we are problem people who have found a way up and out, and who wish to share our knowledge of that way with all who can use it. For it is only by accepting and solving our problems that we can begin to get right with ourselves and with the world about us, and with Him who presides over us all. Understanding is the key to right principles and attitudes, and right action is the key to good living; therefore the joy of good living is the theme of A.A.'s 12th Step."

Regular attendance of AA can bring me the needed connection and that in turn keeps my head and actions in a better place. If you get nothing from the message of this note- remember this slogan "Fill a Chair" – there are no excuses- even if I were to become bedridden- we have the luxury of ZOOM. I'm not a fan of ZOOM but I concede it's certainly a Godsend for some. It's one more way to remain connected.

But what if you're so new that you're just visiting AA? I've been there; many, if not all of us have been there. Our head may fill with excuses to not "Fill a Chair" regularly. Some of the many reasons and activities - are very legitimate. However, 'I can't make it tonight' is a battle that should end with 1st Step.

My life is not too difficult, and neither is my head on most days. I have a lot to be grateful for but I came to many meetings before I hit bottom and surrounded to the fact; I am an Alcoholic and need help. Make no mistake, that was the turning point of my life and when recovery began.

The reason I state that to anyone new is that I am most grateful for the 'old me' who kept coming back and "Filled a Chair" on blind faith. That old me made it possible for this more contented me. I kept coming back for two reasons; there was nowhere else to turn and old timers kept reminding me that they were once where I was and if I would just hold on 'One Day at a Time' I would get better. Don't leave before the miracle happens. And if I ever feel 'expendable' again I hope I remember what our founder Bill once said in a letter- it's at times like these "we have to redouble our spiritual efforts."

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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SJ Intergroup 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

InterGroup Steering Committee: consists of the panel of elected InterGroup Officers, InterGroup Committee Chairpersons/Co-Chairpersons, and a Representative from the Board of Trustees.

Our monthly InterGroup Steering Committee meeting is held on the second Wednesday of each month at the InterGroup Office in Voorhees and is open to all members of the A.A. Fellowship.

**WHEN YOU STOP
CHASING THE
WRONG THINGS,
YOU GIVE THE
RIGHT THINGS
A CHANCE TO
CATCH YOU.**

SOUTH JERSEY INTERGROUP ANSWERING SERVICE HOTLINE TRAINING



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WHERE
SJ Intergroup Office
1000 White Horse Rd #702, Voorhees Township, NJ 08043

FEATURING · Food · Fellowship · Service Opportunities ·
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Zoom meeting ID: 830 0270 3450
Passcode: 8933234

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