

ANONYMOUS SOUTHJERSEY

SOUTH JERSEY INTERGROUP

April 2017

Safety Valve: Using Journaling as His Tenth Step, a Self-critic Attempts to Conquer His Turmoil

One evening, some years ago, I became aware of an endless stream of self-criticism flooding my mind as I was returning home at the end of a workday. I hadn't done this; I hadn't done that; I didn't have this; I didn't have that. I should turn my face to the wall in shame. I had no right to exist on this planet, etc. This self-flagellation simply has to stop, I said to myself.

That night I made a list of positive things I had done that day: meditation and prayer in the morning, projects completed or advanced at work, the AA meeting I had attended. That list was an attempt to rein in my negative emotions and achieve some degree of emotional balance.

My sponsor was gentle with me in early recovery. "Why don't you write some of that out?" he would say, when I called him, sometimes three or four times a day, in the throes of fury over some wrong, real or imagined, that had been visited on me by my boss or my wife. But my emotions seemed to burst every dam I sought to construct. Once I had "the goods" on someone, I would go at them with prosecutorial zeal. I had given only cursory attention

to resentments in my Fourth Step inventory; I paid a terrible price in not fully grasping that resentment formula in our Big Book: "I'm resentful at . . . Affects my . . . Where (was I) to blame?"



Today that resentment formula is a staple of my Tenth Step inventory. The surprising durability of the old idea that if someone wins, I lose, makes the formula essential. It is where I go when I am gripped by a recurring bad feeling about someone, whatever the cause. It is an effort to ease the power I have given people over me. Many times I have put pen to paper in a rage at man or woman or God and even as I wrote began to feel this release from emotional turmoil and a shift toward blessed peace. I am like a boiler in need of a safety valve to reduce the risk of explosion, and the Tenth Step is that safety valve. If I am to avoid endlessly recycling slights, affronts, and other personal injuries, then pen and paper become effective tools in leaching this emotional pain from my system. It is on paper that I begin to practice self-honesty, make real progress

toward the self-discipline that sobriety requires, and slowly learn to treat others with the courtesy, kindness, justice, and love that the essay in Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions sets as a goal

(Continued on page 3)

Men in a Room

Men in a Room gather early
On a Saturday morning to
Connect the dots of words
With feelings. The laughter
Is palpable, and yes, so are
The tears. They talk, but mostly
Listen to the Truths about
their broken marriages,
Hurt children, and sad mothers.
There's a hush of pain and
Reverence when they talk about
Their fathers or their own lives
As dads. Some lament the loss
Of a child: others celebrate
Movie dates with a grandchild.
They've fallen off of bar stools,
Sometimes, forgetting where
They parked their cars with
Dented fenders. Some have
Found blood on their bumpers
The next morning. But, on
This Saturday morning,
This One Day, they Step together
In agreement laughter is
As Spiritual as a Prayer of
Hope, Gratitude, and Serenity.

Joe T.

How to Post an Event to AASJ.org

Let South Jersey Intergroup share information on your AA Event or group anniversary.

To Post an Event to AASJ.org:

1. From anywhere on the website, on the top move your mouse so that it is over the word "Events" next to meetings. A menu will appear.
2. Move your mouse in a downward fashion until the mouse is over the phrase "Submit Event", and click once with the left mouse button. A popup window will appear, please check to see if your browser blocked the popup, if so use a search engine to determine how to allow a popup window, but most browsers when they block a popup window will show a banner or some text you can click on to allow the popup window to appear.
3. Fill in the popup window with your name, phone number, your email (this is important, if you use a fictitious email then our spam filter may block the email from ever reaching the web committee.), and a description of the event. Then move the mouse so that it's over the phrase "Submit Event" and left click once.
4. The popup window will now display a Thank You, you can close this window. If any other window appears please email: [office-manger@aasj.org](mailto:officemanager@aasj.org) and [webmas-ter@aasj.org](mailto:webmaster@aasj.org).

If you would like to include a flyer for the event, please continue by following these steps:

1. From anywhere on the website, on the top move your mouse so that it is over the word "Events" next to meetings. A menu will appear.
2. Move your mouse in a downward fashion until the mouse is over the phrase "Upload Flyer", and click once with the left mouse button. A popup window will appear, please

April 2017 Trivia Question

How many meeting lists did we sell in 2016?

March 2017 Trivia Answer: How do you submit an AA Event to be posted online?

Your AA Group Anniversaries and Events can be submitted on the Events page at aasj.org or e-mailed to officemanager@aasj.org. If you'd like to include a flyer, please upload it after you've submitted your event. Complete instructions titled "How to Post and Event to AASJ.org" are displayed in the adjacent article and available at Intergroup meetings and at the Intergroup Office.

reference step 2 if your web browser blocks the popup.

3. Move your mouse so that the mouse cursor appears over the phrase "Choose File", then click once with the left mouse button.
4. Navigate your computer's file system to find the file of the flyer to upload, click it with the left mouse button, and then left click the word "Open."
5. Move your mouse, until the mouse cursor is over the phrase "Upload File", then press the mouse's left button once.
6. A Thank You will appear then will go back to upload a file, at this time the file has been uploaded and you can close the window. If any other message appears in the window, please feel free to email the flyer to [of- ficemanager@aasj.org](mailto:officemanager@aasj.org) and [webmas- ter@aasj.org](mailto:webmaster@aasj.org) with the event details.



If you're not comfortable with these instructions, please e-mail complete information (and a flyer if desired) to [of- ficemanager@aasj.org](mailto:officemanager@aasj.org) and we will post the event for you.

Please allow 1–2 weeks for events to be posted. If time and space allows, we will also distribute flyers at the Intergroup meeting the month before your event.



April Service Opportunities

Answering Service:

Currently we have shifts open on Saturday 6 to 8pm, 8 to 10 pm and we have Thursday 10am until noon and Friday 8 until 10am. 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 answeringservice@aasj.org.

Budget and Finance: The budget and finance committee is looking for one or two members to learn about the committee responsibilities and the treasurer positions. This is to help ensure a smooth transition into 2018. Quickbooks interest or experience is helpful. Please contact Laura or Lauren at budget@aasj.org

Meeting List Assembly: Intergroup needs individuals to come to the office to fold and staple meeting lists.

We will be folding on Wednesday, 3/29/17 at 2 pm. For other dates and times, please contact Anna at 856-981-7021. This is a great opportunity to come see our office and share some fellowship in service.

Newsletter Articles: Please submit articles to newsletter@aasj.org by April 5th for our May Newsletter.

Public Information: We need some people to help with distributing literature and meeting lists to places such as hospital emergency rooms, libraries, and police departments. Please e-mail Eileen at publicinfo@aasj.org for more info.

Intergroup Reps wanted: If your home group is not represented at Intergroup, please join us on Wednesday, April 19 at 8 pm at St Bartholomew's Episcopal Church (Rt. 70 in Cherry Hill). Be sure to stop at the Unity table to learn more about being an Intergroup rep.

Public Information: The public information committee needs your help to bring our message to high school students. Please contact Eileen at publicinfo@aasj.org for more information.

Speaking Commitments

Hospitals and Institutions (H&I) is looking for speakers to visit the following facilities.

Sunday, April 16 (Easter)

Inspira (Underwood) Hospital Psych Unit - 509 No. Broad St, Woodbury, 4-5pm:

Monday, April 3 and 24

Ancora State Hospital, 202 Spring Garden Rd, Hammonton, 7-8 pm

Wednesday:

Unity Place | 1 Keystone Ave, Cherry Hill, 12:40-1:30 pm; March 22, 29, April 19, 26
Delaware House, 21 Ikea Drive, Westampton, 1-2 pm; March 22, 29

Thursday:

Ancora State Hospital - 202 Spring Garden Rd, Hammonton, 7-8 pm; April 13, 20, 27

(continued on next page)

Unity Place II - 121 S White Horse Pike, Hammonton, 2-3 pm; April 6, 20
Daybreak - 368 Which Horse Pike, Atco, 10:30am -12 pm; March 16, 23, 30, April 13, 20,27

Friday, April 14, 28

Vineland Academy (Men Only) - 2000 Maple Avenue, Vineland, 7-8pm:

Saturday:

Cooper University Hospital Psych Unit - 1 Cooper Plaza, Camden, 10:30-11:30am; April 15, 22
Virtua Memorial Hospital Psych Unit - 175 Madison Ave, Mt. Holly, 8:30-9:30pm; April 1, 22, 29

Safety Valve

(from page 1)

Toward that end, I give free rein to my emotions on paper, as it does me no good to censor myself. "I feel X is vile. I feel it would be a happy day if he were to be run over by a bus." Feelings may not be facts, as we say, but they are powerful, and writing out my anger in terms of them is a necessary and cathartic first step. Thereafter, I can try to be specific in terms of the hurt or the injury I feel I have suffered and then further specify what it affects in me-- pride, self-esteem, security, etc. Further relief is provided when I ask myself what my part in the difficulty has been. Is it my self-centeredness? My competitiveness? My hypersensitivity? Putting a name to my defects-- whether it is envy or jealousy-- is an important part of this process. And then prayer. Not once, not twice, but often for a week or even two, praying that this person have the same happiness, prosperity, etc., I wish for myself. It is where I ultimately must go for relief.

Though I do try to list my assets and be mindful of resentment, some emotional disturbance

ANONYMOUS SOUTHJERSEY

cannot be remedied with a simple formula. In a period of marital crisis, followed by separation and ultimately divorce, I struggled with my core fear--abandonment-- and came to understand, through good direction from my sponsor and a therapist, that a terrified child had accompanied me into my adult years, and how that terror had informed some of my objectionable behavior in my home life. I had sought to deny my powerlessness and mask my fear and vulnerability with long stretches of silent scorn or verbal fury.

To access the underlying source of much of my marital pain, I began to write out my inventory in the form of a question-and-answer dialogue between my lower self and higher self. Over time the exercise highlighted the emotional dependency on my mother that had formed in my childhood years and how that had carried over into adult relationships. If the lower self often spoke as a needy, fearful child, the higher self offered comforting, common sense adult perspective. It would remind me that I was no

longer back in that family of origin matrix.

With Step Ten, we have entered the world of spirit, and so, inevitably, this Step and Step Eleven are intertwined. Meditation can be like a dredging operation. Buried fears and resentments sometimes rise to the surface and I see what a moment before had been invisible to me.

Step Ten says "when," not "if." Inevitably, I will be in the wrong at some point. That being the case, it is best for me to promptly admit my error. To leave the wrong unaddressed is to allow it to grow and fester.

Rationalization, self-justification and rancor thrive the longer I postpone. I may even seek out others to support my "case." And yet, when I become willing to take the simple action required and follow through with an apology or an amend, then I am returned to a state of emotional equilibrium. I have no past or future. I am simply living in the now, where the Higher

(continued on next page)

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.

CONTACT INFORMATION 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 1-856-486-4444

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

Safety Valve

(from previous page)

Power wants me to be. In this regard, an examination of motive is often useful.

"The real war is the war I fight with myself," a man said some years ago. If that is so, then the real victory is over myself and the cruel dictates of my ego: refraining from that face-to-face outburst or waiting 24 hours before dropping that letter in the mailbox. Before letting fly with an oral or written outburst, I can first ask myself these three questions: Is what I say true? Is it kind? Is it necessary? And how many more humiliations must I suffer before I learn to delay hitting the "send" key on a hastily written and inappropriate email?

Journaling may not be a method suitable for everyone. The Steps in large part do become automatic for many of us as we go along, though for me writing is essential as a way of maintaining contact with myself. An inner guide seems to let me know when it is time to put pen to paper. There was a time when I wrote in my journal every day, and perhaps I would be better off if I still did. But now I go to it two or three times a week.

Emotional disturbance can find me at 29 years of recovery as it did when I had 29 minutes. The longer I am sober, the more deeply I am capable of feeling. I have not outgrown fear. I am not so spiritually evolved that I no longer experience resentment.

And sometimes a written inventory is simply to gain clarity on an issue. A simple pros and cons list can do wonders. Nothing could be sadder than to lose touch with ourselves in recovery: to have our connection to our Higher Power blocked by resentment; to be governed by old ideas we are only dimly if at all aware of and that hold us back; or to be reduced by our fears to living sequestered from life. For the sunlight of the spirit to enter, the window must be kept clean so the light can pour through. It's for me to understand that I can pay to have the windows in my apartment cleaned, but that inner window is one that I must tend to. Sponsors and others can be part of the process, but ultimately it is a task for me to perform.

David S.
New York, N.Y.

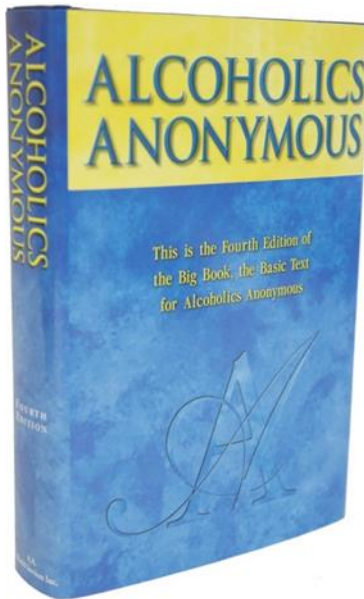
Copyright © AA Grapevine, Inc. October 2010. Reprinted with permission

Heard in the Rooms

Louella H. has been keeping her ear to the ground (specifically, the church basement floors) for pearls of wisdom to help us in our quest to stay sober. Here is the first of what we hope will be many more “Heard in the Rooms” features.

When the spiritual illness is overcome, we straighten out mentally and physically.

(Big Book, pg 64)



Pause, step back and pray



**Sitting in a meeting will not help you recover any more than sitting in a garage will make you a Chevy.
Work, Work, Work....**



Get Out and Get Involved

April 2017

Wednesday, March 22 – Glassboro celebrates its 28th anniversary 7 pm food and fun.

March 24-26 – Area 45 Southern NJ Annual General Service Convention, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Route 70, Cherry Hill, NJ. snjaaconvention.org

Tuesday, March 28 – Tuesday Night Big Book 22nd Anniversary, Food 7 pm, Speaker 7:30 pm. Ashland Church - Ashland Evangelical Presbyterian Church Hall, 33 Evesham Road, Cherry Hill, NJ.

Wednesday, March 29 – 'Voorhees Women of Grace' will be celebrating their 25th Anniversary. The celebration will be at The Hope Church, Cooper Rd. and Centennial Blvd. Voorhees. It is directly behind 'The Meeting Place'. Dinner will be served from 6 pm until 7 pm followed by 2 speakers from 7 pm to 8 pm. Gentlemen are welcome!

Friday, March 31 – Sunlight of the Spirit young people's spiritual meeting are having their 3rd anniversary. Food (pizza and wings) at 8 pm, meeting at 9 pm. All are welcome.

Friday, March 31 – Voorhees "Sunlight of the Spirit" will celebrate their 3rd Anniversary at 700 Cooper Rd. Voorhees. Food starts at 7:30 pm followed by a speaker at 9:30 pm

Tuesday, April 4 – Voorhees Unshakable Foundation will celebrate their 3rd Anniversary with cake and coffee and great speaker FFF. Starts at 6:30 followed by speaker at Fervent Church 904 Cooper Rd, Voorhees

Thursday, April 20 – [Young Men of Moorestown](http://YoungMenofMoorestown.org) 5th Anniversary. Food at 7 PM, speaker at 8. First Baptist Church of Moorestown, 19 West Main Street. Enter through side door on left. No parking in church lot

Friday, April 21 – Bellmawr Friday Night Group is Celebrating its 52nd Anniversary with two speakers! Join us for dessert, coffee, and good fellowship. Dessert at 7:45 pm, speakers at 8:30 pm. Location: Holy Spirit Church 20 East Browning Road (East of Black Horse Pike) Bellmawr, NJ 08031.

Saturday, April 29 – District 14 Unity Event Dinner-Speaker Meeting followed by Music and Dancing Church of the Resurrection Trinity Episcopal Church 800 E. Wood Street Corner of 8th & Wood, Vineland, 08360. Dinner at 5 pm Main Dishes Provided Please Bring Sides & Desserts Meeting at 6:30 pm AA. Speaker and AI-Anon Speaker DJ Music at 8 pm Bring Your Dancing Shoes! 50/50 Drawing - Door Prizes Sobriety Countdown - Doors Open at 4 pm - Suggested Donation: \$10 Children 14 and Under Free if Accompanied by an Adult For More Information Contact: Greg at (856) 238-8488.

Saturday, June 3 – 66th Annual Stepping Stones Lois' Family Group Picnic. TIX on Stepping Stones website's event page@ <http://www.steppingstones.org/events.html>. 914-232- 4822. Historic home of Bill & Lois Wilson, Wit's End-Bill's Studio, 62 Oak Rd, Katonah, NY 10536.

June 23-25 – 6th Annual Liberty Bell Round-up. "The Woodstock of Philadelphia". 10 Featured Speakers. Registration: \$40. Clarion Philadelphia Airport, 76 Industrial Hwy. libertybellroundup.com Dave W. (610) 342-6876 | info@libertybellroundup.com .