

## **Sheets of Sobriety - December 2015**

The opinions and viewpoints expressed in these Sheets of Sobriety are not necessarily those of AA as a whole, or Indianapolis Intergroup. They are the expression of the individuals submitting content to our editor for publication to our fellowship. Please send any comments, feedback or contributions to be published to [briacon@gmail.com](mailto:briacon@gmail.com). **We welcome your thoughts and thank you for your service!**



### **A.A. Thought for the Day**

I have charity, another word for love. That right kind of love which is not selfish passion but an unselfish, outgoing desire to help other people. To do what is best for the other person, to put what is best for him or her above my own desires. To put God first, the other person second, and myself last.

Charity is gentle, kind, understanding, long-suffering, and full of desire to serve. A.A. has given me this. What I do for myself is lost; what I do for others may be written somewhere in eternity. Have I charity?

### **Meditation for the Day**

"Ask what you will and it shall be done unto you." God has unlimited power. There is no limit to what His power can do in human hearts. But we must will to have God's power and we must ask God for it. God's power is blocked off from us by our indifference to it. We can go along our own selfish way without calling on God's help and we get no power. But when we trust in God, we can will to have the power we need. When we sincerely ask God for it, we get it abundantly.

### **Prayer for the Day**

I pray that I may will to have God's power. I pray that I may keep praying for the strength I need.

**"I spent a lifetime in hell, and it only took me twelve steps to get to heaven."**

## AA SERVICE WORK -



### What is A.A. Service Work?

Around 1951, Bill W. defined service as the Third Legacy in the following excerpt;

"Our Twelfth Step - carrying the message - is the basic service that AA's Fellowship gives; this is our principal aim and the main reason for our existence. Therefore, AA is more than a set of principles; it is a society of alcoholics *in action*. We must carry the message, else we ourselves can wither and those who haven't been given the truth will die.

Hence, an AA service is *anything whatever* that helps us to reach a fellow sufferer - ranging all the way from the Twelfth Step itself to a ten-cent phone call and a cup of coffee, or to AA's General Service Headquarters for national and international action. The sum total of *all* these services is our Third Legacy.

Services include meeting places, clubs, hospitals, and intergroup offices; they mean pamphlets, books, and good publicity of almost every description. They require committees, delegates, trustees, and Conferences. And, not to be forgotten, they need voluntary money contributions.

These services, whether performed by individuals, groups, areas, or AA as a whole, are utterly vital to our existence and growth. Nor can we make AA simple by abolishing such services. We would only be asking for complication and confusion.

Concerning any given service, we therefore pose but one question: "*Is this service really needed?*" If it is, then maintain it we must, or fail in our mission to those who seek AA." - *reprinted from the A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Services*

**A.A. Service work includes many opportunities, here are but a few;**

#### **1. Making coffee**

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2. Chairing a meeting
3. greeting at the door
4. Being a sponsor
5. Attending meetings(*yes, attending a meeting is a form of service*)
6. Working with others
7. Holding a group position(*i.e. treasurer, secretary, birthday coordinator*)
8. Serving on local AA committees(*i.e. PI/CPC, Corrections, Treatment Facilities, Grapevine*)
9. Volunteering for AA events(*i.e. Unity Weekend, Grape-a-thon, Cluster Forums*)
10. Serving as a General Service Representative(G.S.R.)(*The G.S.R. represents the voice of the group conscience, reporting the group's thoughts to the district committee member and to the delegate, who passes them on to the conference. This communication is a two-way street, making the G.S.R. responsible for bringing back to the group Conference Actions that affect A.A. unity, health, and growth. Only when a G.S.R. keeps the group informed, and communicates the group conscience, can the Conference truly act for A.A. as a whole.*)
11. Serving as a District Committee Member(D.C.M.)(*The D.C.M. is an essential link between the group G.S.R. and the area delegate to the General Service Conference. As leader of the district committee, made up of all G.S.R.'s in the district, the D.C.M. is exposed to the group conscience of that district. As a member of the area committee, he or she is able to pass on the district's thinking to the delegate and the committee.*)



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## **Twelve Suggested Points of AA Tradition**

**Nobody invented Alcoholics Anonymous. It grew. Trial and error has produced a rich experience. Little by little we have been adopting the lessons of that experience, first as policy and then as Tradition. That process still goes on and we hope it never stops. Should we ever harden too much, the letter might crush the spirit. We could victimize ourselves by petty rules and prohibitions; we could imagine that we had said the last word. We might even be asking alcoholics to accept our rigid ideas or stay away. We never stifle progress like that!**

**Yet the lessons of our experience count for a great deal - a very great deal, we are each convinced. The first written record of AA experience was the book "Alcoholics Anonymous." It was addressed to the heart of our foremost problem - release from the alcohol obsession. It contained personal experiences of drinking and recovery and a statement of those divine but ancient principles, which have brought us a miraculous regeneration. Since publication of "Alcoholics Anonymous" in 1939 we have grown from 100 to 24,000 members. Seven years have passed; seven years, of vast experience with our next greatest undertaking - the problem of living and working together. This is today our main concern. If we can succeed in this adventure - and keep succeeding - then, and only then, will our future be secure.**

**Since personal calamity holds us in bondage no more, our most challenging concern has become the future of Alcoholics Anonymous; how to preserve among us AA's such a powerful unity that neither weakness of persons nor the strain and strife of these troubled times can harm our common cause. We know that Alcoholics Anonymous must continue to live. Else, save few exceptions, we and our fellow alcoholics throughout the world will surely resume the hopeless journey to oblivion.**

**Almost any AA can tell you what our group problems are. Fundamentally they have to do with our relations, one with the other, and with the world outside. They involve relations of the AA to the group, the relation of the group to Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole, and the place of Alcoholics Anonymous in that troubled sea called modern society, where all of humankind must presently shipwreck or find haven. Terribly relevant is the problem of our basic structure and our attitude toward those ever pressing questions of leadership, money, and authority. The future way will depend on how we feel and act about things that are controversial and how we regard our public relations. Our final destiny will surely hang upon what we presently decide to do with these danger-fraught issues!**

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Now comes the crux of our discussion. It is this: Have we yet acquired sufficient experience to state clear-cut policies on these, our chief concerns? Can we now declare general principles which could grow into vital Traditions - Traditions sustained in the heart of each AA by his own deep conviction and by the common consent of his fellows? That is the question. Though full answers to all our perplexities may never be found, I'm sure we have come at least to a vantage point whence we can discern the main outlines of a body of Tradition; which, God willing, can stand as an effective guard against all the ravages of time and circumstance.

Acting upon the persistent urge of old AA friends,(Ed. Note - Particularly Earl T. from Chicago) and upon the conviction that general agreement and consent between our members is now possible, I shall venture to place in words these suggestions for an Alcoholics Anonymous Tradition of Relations -- Twelve Points to Assure Our Future.

Our AA experience has taught us that:

1. Each member of Alcoholics Anonymous is but a small part of a great whole. AA must continue to live or most of us will surely die. Hence our common welfare comes first. But individual welfare follows close afterward.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority -- a loving God as he may express himself in our group conscience.
3. Our membership ought to include all who suffer alcoholism. Hence we may refuse none who wish to recover. Nor ought AA membership ever depend upon money or conformity. Any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an AA group.
4. With respect to its own affairs, each AA group should be responsible to no other authority than its own conscience. But when its plans concern the welfare of neighboring groups also, those groups ought to be consulted. And no group, regional committee, or individual should ever take any action that might greatly affect AA as a whole without conferring with the trustees of the Alcoholic Foundation [now the General Service Board]. On such issues our common welfare is paramount.
5. Each Alcoholics Anonymous group ought to be a spiritual entity having but one primary purpose - that of carrying its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.
6. Problems of money, property and authority may easily divert us from our primary spiritual aim. We think, therefore, that any considerable property of genuine use to AA should be separately incorporated and managed, thus dividing the material from the spiritual. An AA group, as such, should never go into business. Secondary aids to AA such as clubs or hospitals which

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require much property or administration, ought to be so set apart that, if necessary, they can be freely discarded by the groups. The management of these special facilities should be the sole responsibility of those people, whether AAs or not, who financially support them. For our clubs, we prefer AA managers. But hospitals, as well as other places of recuperation, ought to be well outside AA - and medically supervised. An AA group may cooperate with anyone, but should bind itself to no one.

7. The AA groups themselves ought to be fully supported by the voluntary contributions of their own members. We think that each group should soon achieve this ideal; that any public solicitation of funds using the name of Alcoholics Anonymous is highly dangerous; that acceptance of large gifts from any source or of contributions carrying any obligation whatever is usually unwise. Then, too, we view with much concern those AA treasuries which continue, beyond prudent reserves, to accumulate funds for no stated AA purpose. Experience has often warned us that nothing can so surely destroy our spiritual heritage as futile disputes over property, money, and authority.

8. Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional. We define professionalism as the occupation of counseling alcoholics for fee or hire. But we may employ alcoholics where they are going to perform those full-time services for which we might otherwise have to engage nonalcoholics. Such special services may be well recompensed. But personal Twelfth Step work is never to be paid for.

9. Each AA group needs the least possible organization. Rotating leadership is usually the best. The small group may elect its secretary, the larger group its rotating committee, and the groups of a large metropolitan area their central committee, which often employs a full time secretary. The trustees of the Alcoholic Foundation are, in effect, our general service committee. They are the custodians of our AA Tradition and the receivers of voluntary AA contributions by which they maintain AA general Headquarters and our general secretary at New York. They are authorized by the groups to handle our overall public relations and they guarantee the integrity of our principal publication, the AA Grapevine. All such representatives are to be guided in the spirit of service, for true leaders in AA are but trusted and experienced servants of the whole. They derive no real authority from their titles.

Universal respect is the key to their usefulness.

10. No AA group or members should ever, in such a way as to implicate AA, express any opinion on outside controversial issues - particularly those of politics, alcohol reform or sectarian religion. The Alcoholics Anonymous

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groups oppose no one. Concerning such matters they can express no views whatever.

11. Our relations with the outside world should be characterized by modesty and anonymity. We think AA ought to avoid sensational advertising. Our public relations should be guided by the principle of attraction rather than promotion. There is never need to praise ourselves. We feel it better to let our friends recommend us.

12. And finally, we of Alcoholics Anonymous believe that the principle of anonymity has an immense spiritual significance. It reminds us that we are to place principles before personalities; that we are actually to practice a truly humble modesty. This to the end that our great blessings may never spoil us; that we shall forever live in thankful contemplation of him who presides over us all.

May it be urged that while these principles have been stated in rather positive language they are still only suggestions for our future. We of Alcoholics Anonymous have never enthusiastically responded to any assumption of personal authority. Perhaps it is well for AA that this is true. So I offer these suggestions neither as one man's dictum nor as a creed of any kind, but rather as a first attempt to portray that group ideal toward which we have assuredly been led by a Higher Power these ten years past.

Bill W.

P.S. To help free discussion I would like to amplify the Twelve Points of Tradition in future Grapevine pieces. - The A.A. Grapevine, April, 1946

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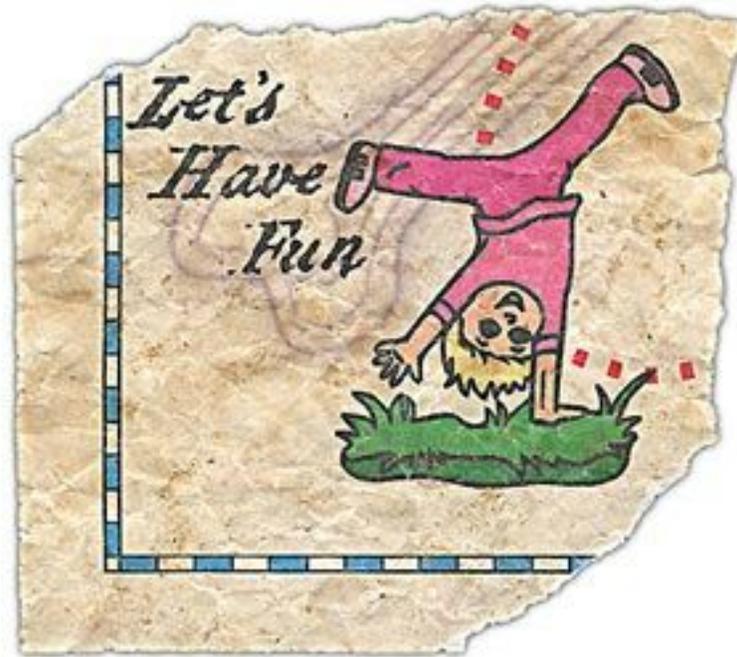
Patricia A. - 42yrs    Brian V. - 2yrs    Gary B. - 51yrs

Nonie V. - 14yrs    Marie D. - 28yrs    Kevin S. 11yrs

Grace G. - 26yrs    David A. - 42yrs    Ursula M. - 20yrs

Greg C. - 15yrs

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Dear Lord,

So far today I've done alright. I haven't gossiped, haven't lost my temper, haven't been greedy, grumpy, nasty, selfish or overindulgent. I'm really glad about that. But in a few minutes, God I'm going to get out of bed, and from then on, I'm probably going to need a lot more help.

Peter M - January 2000

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**Alcoholics are the only people I know who need a pole vault to get over an anthill.**

**Chuck L. - October 2001**

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I know I'm getting better. I try to save my best arguments for when someone else is in the room.

David F. - January 2001

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**Jokes taken from A Rabbit Walks into a Bar**

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