

## **Sheets of Sobriety - August 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!**



### **Opportunity to Grow**

**Difficulties, opposition, criticism--these things are meant to be overcome, and there is a special joy in facing them and in coming out on top. It is only when there is nothing but praise that life loses its charm, and I begin to wonder what I should do about it. --Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit**

**To be alive means to experience difficulties, conflicts, challenges from many directions. What we do with adverse conditions both determines and is determined by who we are. Resistance, most of us have learned, heightens the adversity. Acceptance of the condition, trusting all the while the lesson it offers us is for our benefit, ensures that we'll "come out on top."**

**Difficulties are opportunities for advancement, for increased self-awareness, for self-fulfillment. So often we hear and remind one another, that we grow through pain. We can face any situation knowing we have the strength of the program to shore us up. Strangely, we need challenges in order to grow; without growth we wither. Happiness is the bounty for facing the momentarily unhappy conditions.**

**Any difficulty I meet today offers me a chance for even greater happiness; it guarantees my growth. - **Each Day A New Beginning****

**"Once more: The alcoholic at certain times has no effective mental defense against the first drink. Except in a few rare cases, neither he nor any other human being can provide such a defense. His defense must come from a Higher Power." - Pg.1**



## **Living with Alcoholism - Joscelyn**

**It's a complicated messy story for me. I'm sure that many could relate to this, and I hope that by sharing some of my story that I can help others and also help myself. I have had my problems in the past, mainly an eating disorder and years ago... I knew I was at risk for getting this disease. Most of my family are recovering alcoholics, and it is a big family. 15 of my 20 aunts and uncles are recovering, but rarely go to meetings. Maybe they just don't want to talk about it. Maybe that is the problem.**

**Knowing this didn't stop me. I moved to a new country to teach English and discovered after 6 years sober that all my friends loved to go to this little pub/restaurant. When I was in treatment for ED they advised me not to have alcohol, as it is shown people with one disorder are more likely to have another. Like a net, the underneath problem pushes through in another place when you stop it in one place. It just pops out of another hole but still it's just the same problem.**

**I started going to this pub, just to spend time with my friends and I didn't drink for a few years, only diet coke or occasionally a Dr. Pepper with my dinner. The owner was my friend and started stocking soda because he knew I always asked for it alone. The food was fantastic and it made me feel a part of things to just be able to go order a burger and have some friends to talk with, to dance with and feel cool.**

**Eventually I met a boy. He turned out to not be a good decision, but when I was with him I felt like I could do anything... I felt out of place with all my friends who were casually throwing back drinks and playing games that I couldn't join, so I started to have one or two drinks, telling myself "It's just being social".**

**Next thing you know, I am shaking in the morning when I wake up and drinking most nights. It just crept up on me. I started going downhill fast. It was like I was stuck on the top of a mountain and no one could help or understand when I tripped, fell and started rolling down the hill. It felt like everyone was angry at me, and what did I turn to? I think you can guess. Needless to say it made things worse, rather than better.**

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**I'm going to share a hopeful note. I have recently decided to NOT turn to this disease to pass the time and get through the day. I see it for what it is, and I recognize that I am in fact, powerless. I am asking for help, again.**

**Living with Alcoholism is so complicated. There is shame and self hatred, things I am all too familiar with from the ED. There is the realization that you have to give up some friendships and some things that trigger the problems, in order to keep yourself safe. There is a realization that you have to ask for help and can't do it all on your own. It makes you feel weak. It makes you want to go back and pretend things are all normal, well and good. However you can't get past that feeling that really you know they are not.**

**There is a book called "Living with ED" that I read in treatment and I think it is appropriate. It can be applied to this problem. They name the ED "Ed" and make him a character that almost takes over your mind but is separate from you. IT IS NOT YOU. The goal is to find your real self through all the resources that you have; to let go of thinking that the disease is helpful. To see that it is actually harming you and to say good-bye to your "friend" Ed and see that you could have a better life without him. I think the same thing is true about alcoholism. You think it is helping stop the shaking or helping you make friends, but really it is hurting you. When your drinking is causing you problems... you have a problem with drinking.**

**It is hard living in another country, with friends that all drink to excess regularly. It is hard to not fit into the crowd and be the one saying "no thanks". It is hard to bend the knee and say, this has become out of control and I am scared... please help me. But I am doing it. If I can do it, I think that it will help other people to hear that I have.**

**I am not very religious anymore, but I used to read the bible when I was younger. My favorite quote was "Be not afraid. Only believe." Mark 5:36. I am using this, as well as my AA book to try. I think that being willing and trying are the first step in a nutshell. Sometimes it's good for even the most experienced AA members to hear about another's first step, to remind them of what could have been and why they chose to stop the madness.**

**To all you friends out there that I just haven't met yet.. be not afraid, and I will believe there is a brighter future in store for me if I just keep going step by step. There is a unicorn around the corner and I will be able to see it if I just keep on stepping. I hope this helps some folks to remember, to start, or to just send me well wishes on my journey. I hope that it helps you on your journey, too.**

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## Step of the Month:



## Step 8

### Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all

**We have a list of all persons we have harmed and to whom we are willing to make amends. We made it when we took inventory. We subjected ourselves to a drastic self- appraisal. Now we go out to our fellows and repair the damage done in the past. We attempt to sweep away the debris which has accumulated out of our effort to live on self-will and run the show ourselves. If we haven't the will to do this, we ask until it comes. Remember it was agreed at the beginning *we would go to any lengths for victory over alcohol.***

**-A.A. Big Book p.76**

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**Learning how to live in the greatest peace, partnership and brotherhood with all men and women, of whatever description, is a moving and fascinating adventure. Every A.A. has found that he can make little headway in this new adventure of living until he first backtracks and really makes an accurate and unsparing survey of the human wreckage he has left in his wake. To a degree, he has already done this when taking moral inventory, but now the time has come when he ought to redouble his efforts to see how many people he has hurt, and in what ways. This reopening of emotional wounds, some old, some perhaps forgotten, and some still painfully festering, will at first look like a purposeless and pointless piece of surgery. But if a willing start is made, then the great advantages of doing this will so quickly reveal themselves that the pain will be lessened as one obstacle after another melts away. - Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, p. 77-78**

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## Tradition of the Month:



### Tradition 8

Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever non professional, but our service centers may employ special workers

#### An Alcoholic Shares:

There is a saying in the 12 step groups, "In order to keep it you must give it away". The 12th Step says, "Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps we tried to carry this message to others and to practice these principles in all our affairs".

The 8th Tradition insures that anytime a newcomer reaches out for help in AA he will receive it free of charge. Members freely share their own experience, strength and hope with the newcomer to help themselves in their own recovery in the process of Giving it away in order to keep it.

Tradition seven says we are self supporting through our own contributions, and tradition 8 states that contributions can be used to employ special workers for literature, for group conscience process, from group to district, from district to area, from area delegate to GSO, from GSO to AA worldwide...ect.

Today in modern society, carrying the message is not only accomplished face to face or by telephone, but online technology does not hinder carrying the message to the alcoholic that still suffers. It helps it.

The 8th Tradition is so very simple, but greed no matter how you try to see it is still greed. I know today that nothing good comes from a negative action or a negative reaction, and to be paid for our services by holding workshops to make a profit to an individual is not in AA s best intrest.

But paying someone for their services outside of twelfth-step work does not compromise AA's message. It just gets other jobs done so the recovering alcoholic has the freedom to be there, reach out and help another alcoholic have the literature to give and have meeting lists printed and so much more.

Those who work in service for us are worthy of their hire. This very important Tradition is the very rock on which the freely given program of AA is built. Someone has to answer the phone while the rest of us get on with our regained lives.

AA is not therapy. When a professional in the alcoholism field, even one who is in the fellowship does real therapy with a person who has not yet attended

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AA or hasn't completely dropped the rock of denial this is NOT paid 12th step work its paid professional work. It is all right for that AA member who is also a therapist to encourage attendance at AA or to discuss sobriety progress within the framework of the steps with the alcoholic within therapeutic sessions.

Some self righteous, self appointed AA tradition police had to be reminded by an old-timer of a few of the choice words of Bill W in Warranty five contained in Concept XII. There are not supposed to be any official or unofficial tradition vigilantes in AA.

Of course what the full context of this tradition is saying is that AA itself, as an organization doesn't hire any paid counselors to go out and do OUR usual twelfth step work. AA says that we have to be friendly with our friends in the treatment community, even those who don't completely agree with our methods. - Anonymous



**S.O.S. IS DESPERATELY SEEKING ARTICLES -**  
**Anything recovery bases is welcome- Experience, steps,**  
**traditions, fellowship, sponsorship, ect...**  
**Please send submissions to [briaocon@gmail.com](mailto:briaocon@gmail.com)**

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SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						<u>1</u> <b>STEP 11</b> <b>SPIRITUAL</b> <b>RETREAT</b>
						<b>DISTRICT 34</b> <b>MONTHLY</b> <b>MEETING 9:00</b> <b>am</b>
<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u> <b>WHAT IS IT?</b> <b>11:00 am</b>
	<b>Freedom from</b> <b>Alcohol Big</b> <b>Book Study 1st</b> <b>Anniversary</b> <b>7:00 pm</b>	<b>District 20</b> <b>Meeting 7:00 pm</b>				
<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>15</u> <b>"Where Money</b> <b>&amp; Spirituality</b> <b>Mix" 1:00 pm</b>
<b>District 36</b> <b>Meeting 5:30 pm</b> <b>Indianapolis</b> <b>Intergroup</b> <b>Sunday 9:30 pm</b>		<b>District 24</b> <b>Meeting 6:45 pm</b>				
<u>16</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>22</u>
			<b>Celebrating</b> <b>Our</b> <b>Anniversaries</b> <b>Together! The</b> <b>Pleasant Group</b> <b>&amp; The Pleasant</b> <b>Beginners</b> <b>Group 6:00 pm</b>			
<u>23</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>29</u>
<b>Area 23</b> <b>Assembly 9:00</b> <b>am</b> <b>District 30</b> <b>Meeting 1:00 pm</b>				<b>District 22</b> <b>Meeting 6:30 pm</b>		<b>Area 23</b> <b>Agenda</b> <b>Meeting 12:00</b> <b>pm</b> <b>hi5 Workshop</b> <b>1:00 pm</b>
<u>30</u>	<u>31</u>					

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# Congratulations!

Jeanie V - 10 yrs    Charlie N - 29 yrs    Stephen M - 16 yrs  
Judy B - 5 yrs    Kathleen H - 45 yrs    Paul K - 35 yrs  
Marvin B - 9 yrs    Patricia W - 38 yrs    Fran E - 47 yrs  
Marty P - 34 yrs    Tom F - 24 yrs    Lynn M - 30 yrs  
Margaret R - 42 yrs    Stacey C - 8 yrs    Beverly S - 26 yrs



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**An old-timer comes home from his home group meeting, gets ready for bed, and is on his knees saying his evening prayers. He's in the middle of his "God blesses" saying "God bless the guy who says the same thing no matter what the topic, God bless George, the 'cake lady,' God bless . . ." suddenly he pauses and looks up. Then says, "You know God. I wonder if there is AA in heaven. If there isn't AA in heaven, I don't know if I want to go there. These folks are so important to me, I don't want to spend eternity without them."**

**There's a bolt of lightening and a loud clap of thunder and then the olde timer hears a voice saying, "I have good news and bad news. The good news is, there is AA in heaven. The bad news is ..... "You're speaking tomorrow night."**

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**If you are drinking to forget ... please pay in advance!**

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**An AA member on a twelfth step call drops into a prospective pigeon' home after the prospects wife had walked out on him and left the house keeping to her drunken husband. The house was a mess, including the kitchen's sink, full of dirty dishes.**

**After the two had been talking for a few hours, the prospect asked his new AA friend if he cared to share a pot of stew that had been simmering on the stove. The AA member accepted, began to eat, and became puzzled about the behavior of the prospects dog, which was whining and pawing at him. "Why is he acting so odd?" he inquired.**

**"Oh"explained the prospect, "I guess it's because you're eating out of his dish."**

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