



The Tributary

Issue 2011– Q3
2011 Summer Assembly, St. Stephens, July 29-31

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-- Willingness to choose sobriety every time --

I arrived in the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous 18 years ago. It took ten of those years, and 6 trips to treatment for me to become a “in the middle” of the pack member and experience the joy of recovery. I had many days and months of not drinking, but had never experienced what real recovery felt like. The fellowships in both Laramie and Cheyenne were not the problem -- they loved me, sponsors worked with me and AA never gave up on me.

At the end, my daily drinking had taken nearly everything from me except my life. The miracle happened September 13, 2003 when I entered long term treatment in Cheyenne. I had the opportunity to complete the 4 week Back to Basics meeting locally and could, for the first time, experience the freedom which comes from having worked all 12 Steps. That is where the joy of real recovery found me. I became willing to safeguard my sobriety – no matter what life threw my way. Long-term sobriety is as simple as making a decision to take action in that split second of choice. And each time I make the choice to stay in recovery, my ability to do it repeatedly grows.

I used to believe that, “sure, your lives got better” but it wouldn’t work for me. I am happy to report I was wrong and my life today is “beyond my wildest dreams”. Today I also choose to take action to be in recovery, no matter what.

Laura G.

-- Diversity in Alcoholics Anonymous -- -- & Our Primary Purpose --

No matter where I am in the world today, I’m always surrounded by a very diverse group of individuals of various ethnics, creeds, colors, backgrounds, appearances and personalities. One quick look around, will instantly confirm this. However, I’m reasonably sure that all of us have one thing in common. That being, that we’re all sober today because someone took the time to practice our primary purpose of the “Fifth Tradition” and carried the message of Alcoholics Anonymous to us, regardless of our differences or diversities.

The Long Form of Tradition Five states “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”. How important is this Tradition? In the book “Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions”, on page 150, it states “Around it our Society gathers in unity. The very life of our Fellowship requires the preservation of this principle”. Those are some pretty strong statements!

The primary message of Alcoholics Anonymous, is to show others how we have recovered from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body and it has no bearing on our differences or diverse natures, because the disease of alcoholism is not selective and simply doesn’t care who we are, what we are or where we came from. Our message is infinite, based upon our personal experiences with the 3 Legacies of Recovery, Unity and Service.

Our conference approved literature provides many useful tools and specific instructions to help us

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carry our message to the still suffering alcoholic. However, these publications aren't intended to carry our message for us. Our message is most effectively carried when one drunk shares their experience, strength and hope, face to face with another drunk, in the Language of the Heart.

In recent years, I've heard our old-timers say that they believe our message has become diluted and there has been quite a bit of discussion generated about a general "Lack of Participation" within our fellowship. I too, have these same concerns and believe that this may be a secondary disease, within our Fellowship, that has the potential to destroy us from within. Is this a result of the message that's being carried today? It appears to me, that a lot of emphasis is being put into carrying our message of the 12 Steps of Recovery, with very little focus on our 12 Traditions of Unity and the 12 Concepts of Service. Aren't all of these Legacies essential to the survival of our Fellowship and long term sobriety?

After drinking for many years, there were several people telling me that I had a problem with alcohol and that I needed to do something about it. Unbeknownst to me, I was already living in the delusion of Alcoholism and refused to admit that I had any kind of a problem with alcohol. I continued my uncontrolled drinking for many more years before the day finally came that I couldn't take it any more. I had arrived at that jumping off place and had no idea what I was going to do. The humility and despair were tremendous! It was then, that I finally made that simple plea .. "God, please help me".

Through a very astounding sequence of events, I ended up in a Treatment facility, discussing my dilemma with a doctor who had been my family physician for many years and had been trying to get me to quit drinking 25 years prior to that time. In our discussion, he told me that they could help me get sober, but in order to stay sober, I had to get involved in Alcoholics Anonymous. It was because of him, that I showed up at my first meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous.

I didn't know if I was an alcoholic or not and I knew absolutely nothing about the disease of alcoholism. When I walked into that first meeting, I looked around and saw a very diverse group of people. There were men and women from all walks of life and I was scared to death! Fortunately, these people took me into their fold and made me feel welcome. They didn't care who I was, what I was, where I came from, what my background was, or what my beliefs were. They simply told me that if I had a problem with alcohol and wanted a way out, they

had one for me. They strongly suggested that I needed to attend meetings on a regular basis, to get a sponsor and have HIM, not her or them, take me through the steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. I knew that I had run out of options and had no choice but to do as they suggested. Over time, these people taught me what an alcoholic and the disease of alcoholism really are. They shared their experience, strength and hope with me and taught me how to stay sober one day at a time. Thank God for these people, for they had utilized our cherished "Fifth Tradition", carried out "Our Primary Purpose" and taught me how to pass this precious gift onto others. This one, single principle of Alcoholics Anonymous, saved my life and has provided me with a way of life, beyond my wildest dreams!

There are thousands of Alcoholics in the world dying every day because they don't have our solution. There is no doubt in my mind, where I would be today, if someone hadn't taken the time to provide me with their precise message of recovery, the same way that it had been so freely given to them by another sober member of Alcoholics Anonymous.

I didn't get sober by doing a self-study of our "Big Book". I didn't get sober by reading our AA approved literature and pamphlets. I got sober because another sober member of Alcoholics Anonymous was willing to exercise "Our Primary Purpose" face to face with me and guide me through the 12 Steps of "Recovery", the 12 Traditions of "Unity" and the 12 Concepts of "Service". That's the only reason that I'm sober today and the only way that I get to keep what I have, is to pass it on to others in the same precise manner that it was freely given to me.

It's my hope and prayer that the things we do and say in Alcoholics Anonymous, will truly be in the best interest of the alcoholic who still suffers and the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole. It is essential that we do this, regardless of what our differences and diversities may be, because "We Are Responsible for AA's Future – Let It Begin With Us"!

Allen W., Area 76 Delegate

---- Call for a Cartoon or Artwork ----

Surely there must be an alcoholic cartoonist/artist in Wyoming!? There's only one more issue to go in my term as editor of the Tributary. Please send your production to xxx@xxx.xxx. Instant fame and riches.

---- Service. ----

Service positions are described in the service manual, which assumes a good working knowledge of the twelve steps, traditions and concepts.

My sponsor led me through the steps so I could find a "design for living that really works". It required of me to be honest, open-minded and willing. Above all I had to become less selfish. The process has been working for quite a few "one day at a time".

After experiencing a spiritual awakening as the result of the first eleven steps, I was introduced to the traditions. For some reason my group selected me to represent them at district and area. I was given a service manual to read and follow. I gained a deeper understanding of the traditions as I observed the same problems occurring that brought the traditions into form in the beginning: "quarrels over membership, leadership and money", "strivings for power and prestige", "schisms which would split AA apart". I can witness the same occurrences today.

Service positions are summed up in tradition nine: "directly responsible to those they serve". I believe the greatest service responsibility is accurate reporting to ensure an informed "group conscience".

Tradition one emphasizes placing our common welfare first because without unity I cannot recover.

Tradition twelve reminds me not to set my personality ahead of principles.

Greg B., Alt Delegate
(second from the bottom in Area 76)

---- A Story ----

I'm sure glad A.A. works for me. I wished it worked for everybody. The Big Book shows us "*precisely how we recovered*" (preface), but there seems to be no one path to "getting it".

After 32 years in the program, I have many "yets" if I return to my natural state -- drinking. Back when I came to A.A., a popular phrase was, "The man I was drank. The man I was will drink again. I don't want to be the man I was." Appendix II, Spiritual Experience, of the Big Book is big on "change". That's what I needed. It's been slow and imperfect, but I now have 16 years of sobriety (actually, 2 periods of 16 years each).

I'm sympathetic to Athiests in this program. I love the italicized "God, *as we understood Him*" in the steps. It's just another link in the chain of the program that allows it to work for me. The article in this month's Grapevine, "An Athiest Asks", asks for more tolerance in A.A. of athiests. I am sympathetic to him and all athiests, but I don't see his problem. It appears to me that A.A. is invitational to any and all people with a "desire to stop drinking" (Tradition Three). Including me.

To a small degree, that article reminds me of "aa-sucks.com" (that's not a real site, but there are sites like that). I can view those opinions and still know that A.A. is what it claims to be -- a spiritual program. Instead of being insulted or getting defensive, I try to understand the points they are making. Half of their arguments are, in my opinion, mistaken beliefs, and the other half have some merit and are an opportunity for me to take inventory of how A.A. comes across to the newcomer.

My daughters (who were toddlers when I first came to A.A.) have spiritual lives without being alcoholics. My grandkids are still kids -- I want A.A. to be there for them if they need it.

Regarding this assembly and the October convention in Casper (As Bill Sees It #297):

"We used to be skeptical about large A.A. gatherings like conventions, thinking they might prove too exhibitionistic. But, on balance, their benefit is huge. While each A.A.'s interest should center principally in those about him and upon his own group, it is both necessary and desirable that we all get a larger vision of the whole.

"The General Service Conference in New York also produces this effect upon those who attend. It is a vision-stretching process."

Dave C.



Guatemala

---- **Events, Deadlines, and Links** ----

(Additions, corrections to xxx@xxx.xxx)

From the Guidelines:

Mar-Apr: Winter Assembly
May-Jun: Spring Convention
Jul-Aug: Summer Assembly
Oct-Nov: Fall Convention

2011 Dates:

Jul 29-31 Summer Assembly, St Stephens
Oct 21-23 Fall Convention, Casper

2012 Dates:

Winter Assembly, Sundance
Spring Convention, Laramie
Summer Assembly, Torrington
Fall Convention, Sheridan

Local Events (add yours):

Sep 2-5 17th Unity Campout, Frye Lake (Lander)
Sep 10-11 Dist 3 Summer Roundup, Gillette
Sep 22-25 15th Archive Workshop, Helena, MT
See these and other flyers on website.

Links:

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