

NEWSLETTER for the Fellowship

NOV 2017

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Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi

Lord, make me a channel of Thy peace - that where there is hatred, I may bring love - that where there is wrong, I may bring the spirit of forgiveness - that where there is discord, I may bring harmony - that where there is error, I may bring truth - that where there is doubt, I may bring faith - that where there is despair, I may bring hope - that where there are shadows, I may bring light - that where there is sadness, I may bring joy. O, Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled, as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved, as to love; for it is in the giving that we receive; it is in the pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

AMEN.

Taken from: <http://www.aaigo.net/pdf/TheEleventhStepPrayers.pdf>

Tradition Eleven - *"Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films."*

Court-Ordered AA: A member expresses doubts about mandated meetings

*Taken From: <http://www.aabroward.org/newsletters/2017/November%202017.pdf>
Reprinted in Volume 11 of Suite 404, November 2018 issue. Copyright © AA Grapevine, Inc. April 1985.*

I am an alcoholic and a psychologist. I went to psychology school to try to find my own marbles. I got sober when I was a doctoral candidate and I found my marbles in AA. That is a long story, which I won't go into, but it has a bearing on what I do want to talk about.

I have been sober for twenty years. I have seen all sorts of treatments for alcoholism come and go. All are helpful to some degree.

I was recently talking to a recovering friend. She was telling me about her journey through DUI schools and "required" AA meeting attendance. She talked about the negative attitudes that her classmates had about AA, and about the ways they forged their slips and meeting information. It reminded me of the hundreds of people I have met in my work over the years who were alcoholic, but, when AA was mentioned, expressed a very negative response. "I went there when I was twenty-five and they made me go again when I was thirty . . ." and so on. Many of these people never gave AA another look. They had decided.

Some of these people have survived, finding sobriety in other ways. Some are just living out their alcoholism, and others are dead or jailed. One thing that I feel they all have in common is that they all appear to have been harmed by coerced attendance at AA. They experienced a forced exposure to ideas and principles before they were ready to absorb them. Later, when these ideas and principles were needed, they had already been rejected.

To me, this is a great sadness. Anyone who has sponsored a willing newcomer knows how long it can take for him to absorb new ideas, and to find substance in those ideas. The great majority of the coerced don't--or can't--even try. The rebellious nature of the alcoholic, and/or the absence of surrender, wouldn't allow them.

I can understand why agencies, courts, and treatment facilities send people to AA. It works for those who want it. Their rationale is that if we help one person out of a hundred, we have been successful. I have many friends in AA who started recovery in this manner.

But, I wonder about the other ninety-nine. These outside entities see that AA works, but they do not understand how. So AA has become a court sentence, a treatment goal, and a punitive hoop that must be jumped through in order to escape some system. I am not talking about an introduction to AA, i.e., attending a couple of beginner's meetings. Instead, requirements of up to ninety meetings are not unusual.

I am also concerned about our Traditions. Attraction rather than promotion has a great wisdom within it. In recovery, we are asked to become obedient to the unenforceable. For who can make another pray, be honest, love, pursue humility, undertake selfless giving, or practice tolerance? These are profound ideas and cannot be forced on anyone. Early recovery is a fragile enough time without changing the program into a monitored and mandatory experience.

My home group has been struggling with this issue for months. We are spurred on by one agency that collects information on who is chairing the meeting and the topic of discussion. Their intent is to minimize the amount of forgeries of meeting slips, but they seriously underestimate the creativity of a drunk. Another agency requires not only documentation, but notes on the content of the meeting. My home group finds this compilation of data to be objectionable and finally had to address this paper signing issue.

After several business meetings, we came to this conclusion: Immediately prior to the start of the meeting, our chairperson announces: "In a minute we will begin our AA meeting. If there is anyone here who needs a paper signed, please bring it forward now. We sign these papers as a courtesy."

Many of us understand your circumstances, but AA is not affiliated with the courts or treatment programs. You are welcome to stay for our meeting if you would like."

This seems to work quite well, although we are seeing fewer papers to be signed at that meeting. Those who do come to get them signed almost always stay for our meetings. The fewer papers may well be a signal that certain agencies don't like our meeting anymore. We like it, though, and welcome any newcomer with love, tolerance, and, we hope, attraction.

One time, when I was testifying in court, the State's Attorney asked me if I thought the defendant should attend AA. I replied that I would recommend that she attend a meeting, phone AA, or read some pamphlets. The State's Attorney said, "I can make her go." I asked how. He told me that he would require documentation of attendance. I told him that he would receive in return only a list of the first my heart and knew it. After another ten minutes or so, the experience mellowed, and I walked back to my office, assured and quieted and full of peace. Often, but not as intensely, I approach the same type of peace through meditation. (And a similar experience happened to me about twelve years earlier, but I was too rebellious, too drugged, too angry to accept.)

I go on looking. If my heart [and] my mind are open, it's a lot easier to find that which I'm looking for, that which I need, that which I want. My Highest Power has brought me to a new awareness, a new sponsor, and a greater faith. I often turn my back on it all, but the next day it's all there waiting for me if I want it. And since coming back to AA, I haven't picked up a drink or drug. I look forward to each expansion of my life to something new. Down in the pit of my being is a unity with life and the loving action of God.

-- R. L., St. Petersburg, Florida

Step Eleven: Suggestions for Folks Not Inclined towards Organized Religion

Taken from: The COIN, Vol 12, Number 11, November 2017. <https://aasanjose.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/November-2017.pdf>

Let me begin with a question. If you are either not inclined toward organized religion or outright rebuff the "God thing," then how are you to feel about a Step that is dedicated to prayer? This article is for you if you cringe at the thought of having to take a Step that implores you to seek "through prayer and meditation to improve [y] our conscious contact with God, as [you] understood Him, praying only for knowledge for His will for [you] and the power to carry that out."

I was able to overcome any trepidation I had at the concept of prayer two ways. First of all, I recommend reading Page 86 of the Big Book. Those pages state that you ought to conduct a personal recap at the end of each day and determine what you should do differently going forward. It goes on to implore you to consciously contemplate the coming day when you wake up, thinking hard about how you can do the right thing versus follow your own selfish will. If you are so inclined, consult with your God in the process. However, even if you do not, those are moments of self-examination that will definitely bear fruit in your daily life.

The second way I overcame my apprehension about prayer was to practice a meditation technique I learned in my outpatient program. It is called the "three-by-three." After reading this paragraph, give it a try. I will literally describe the three Steps and conduct them as I type the words below in my home office.

1) Focus your vision intently on three different sights, one at a time. See the blend of colors, tones, and textures of each in succession. I am looking first at the glare of my desk lamp on the white paint of my closet door, noting the paint strokes. From there, I move to the deep orange of my varsity letter from high school that I have framed on the wall. Finally, I observe the binding of my 12x12 on my desk; it is falling apart.

2) Then focus your hearing just as intently on three different sounds, one at a time. Listen for pitch and immerse yourself in pure background noise. I can hear a distant plane overhead, fading. From there, I hear my five-year-old talking to her dolls – just a murmur that ebbs and flows. Finally, my office wall clock has a loud tick-tock and I've never noticed that it has two distinct sounds as it ticks (or tocks).

3) Finally, make your body and skin hyper-sensitive to feeling. My right arm is off the edge of the desk and the desk cuts ever-so-slightly into my elbow. My left foot is half on the warm carpet and half the chilly wood floor. My face is slightly flushed after a day outside in the sun and the wind.

Give it a try: sights times three; sounds times three; touch times three.

This simple exercise has quite literally changed my life. I use it at work, in traffic, and at home. Returning to the Big Book, the authors state at the bottom of page 87 that "as we go through the day we pause when agitated or doubtful, and ask for the right thought or action." It is precisely at that time that I break out the 3x3.

Let me return to the question from the beginning of this article: How can you take Step Eleven if you are skeptical and hesitant about organized religion? It is quite easy. Reviewing your day and preparing for the next day are logical and rational actions. Pushing a thorny issue out of the way while you focus intently on sights, sounds, and touch is bound to help you relax in the face of stressful situations. Worst case? There is exactly zero downside. Best case, you will have a more rewarding and fruitful life – one day at a time.

– JD D.



Things We Cannot Change

*Bus Driver Steve W., of
Oak Hills, CA passed away
November 12th, 2017 with
over 29 years of sobriety.*

*His Home Group was the Men's Stag in
Wrightwood.*

Information on his memorial will be forthcoming.

*We welcome any Bus Driver Steve W. stories for our upcoming
newsletters. Please submit stories/memories to
newsletterforthefellowship@yahoo.com*

He will be missed.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY AS OF OCTOBER 31, 2017		
	BALANCE	
Savings	\$20,526.76	
CD	\$10,036.36	
Cash in Union Checking	\$ 5,558.32	
INCOME	OCTOBER	Y.T.D.
Group Donations	\$ 1,494.79	\$ 16,388.14
Birthdays	\$ -	\$ 333.00
Memorials	\$ -	\$ 24.00
P.Y.M.W.Y.M.I. (12 members)	\$ 283.00	\$ 2,877.00
Newsletter	\$ -	\$ 30.00
Chips and Medallions	\$ 545.78	\$ 7,632.32
Literature	\$ 1,469.07	\$ 14,160.87
Credit Card Fee	\$ 16.00	\$ 150.00
Coffee Kitty	\$ 12.00	\$ 182.28
Faithful Fivers		\$ 85.31
Womens Banquet	\$ -	\$ 250.00
Buck of the Month	\$ 23.84	\$ 51.88
2017 High Desert Convention	\$ -	\$ 1,000.00
Reimbursement/ Refund	\$ -	\$ 43.00
Ride for Recovery	\$ -	\$ 3,484.00
Mountain AA Conference	\$ -	\$ 300.00
Intergroup 7th Tradition	\$ -	\$ 121.00
INCOME FOR THE MONTH	\$ 3,844.48	\$ 47,112.80
EXPENSES		
Rent	\$ 360.00	\$ 3,600.00
C.A.M. Charges	\$ 116.91	\$ 1,257.26
Utilities	\$ 73.06	\$ 805.45
Manager Salary	\$ 1,190.08	\$ 11,338.55
Charter	\$ 101.54	\$ 1,016.17
Printing	\$ 55.33	\$ 816.40
Security/Maintenance/Office	\$ 199.77	\$ 2,325.08
Chips and Medallions	\$ 502.39	\$ 4,200.30
Literature	\$ 54.00	\$ 11,698.40
Payroll Tax State (EDD)	\$ 79.23	\$ 483.16
Board of Equalization (sales tax)	\$ 539.00	\$ 1,748.00
Federal Payroll Tax	\$ 1,227.10	\$ 4,585.45
Freedom Financial (tax prep)	\$ 60.00	\$ 180.00
Credit Card Fee	\$ 26.54	\$ 215.57
Professional Services	\$ -	\$ 260.00
Liability Insurance (Hub Int.)	\$ -	\$ 575.00
Alarm	\$ -	\$ 384.00
Ride For Recovery	\$ -	\$ 360.95
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 4,584.95	\$ 45,849.74
NET INCOME	\$ (740.47)	\$ 1,263.06
APPLE VALLEY		
Keep it Simple		\$ 160.83
How It Works	\$ 36.00	\$ 586.44
Simple Changes		\$ 200.00
Children of Chaos	\$ 40.00	\$ 651.56
Front & Center	\$ 126.87	\$ 1,299.93
Saturday Speaker Meeting		\$ 600.07

Nuts and Fruits		\$ 78.00
Womens 12 X 12/ Big Bk.		\$ 153.00
Sun. Just for Today		\$ 50.00
Thursday Mens Stag		\$ 150.00
Primary Purpose		\$ 180.00
Anonymous Group		\$ 852.00
Wed. Womens Participation		\$ 56.60
Questions and Answers		\$ 30.00
Coffee Talk		\$ 152.00
Campfire Group	\$ 62.00	\$ 160.28
7 pm Monday Big Book		\$ 27.00
There is a solution	\$ 70.00	\$ 80.00
Original Big Book		\$ 320.00
Cedar Street Big Book		\$ 54.00
Barstow		
Los Coyotes Mens Group		\$ 680.00
Mon. Mens Meeting- Vets Home		\$ 10.00
Friday Nite Live	\$ 200.00	\$ 900.00
Our Primary Purpose		\$ 200.00
Wed. Meeting-Vets Home		\$ 130.00
Womens Rule 62- Vets Home	\$ -	\$ 25.00
Ft. Irwin		
New Horizons II		\$ 20.00
Helendale		
4th Dimension Big Book		\$ 100.00
HESPERIA		
Back to Basics	\$ 405.00	\$ 1,790.00
Hesperia Umbrella Group	\$ 300.00	\$ 3,880.00
Wed. Mens Stag		\$ 60.00
LUCERNE VALLEY		
Newberry Springs		
Mon. 12 x 12		\$ 60.00
Sat. Breakfast Club		\$ 200.00
Phelan		
Tues. Phelan Sober		\$ 145.00
Big Book Study		\$ 60.00
Silver Lakes		
No Valid Complaints		\$ 220.00
Thursday Big Book		\$ 80.00
Sat. Nite Serenity Group		\$ 262.00
VICTORVILLE		
Tumbleweed Group	\$ 15.78	\$ 191.80
4PM Big Book Study	\$ 5.00	\$ 15.00
Friday Night Speaker Meeting		\$ 30.69
Mixed Bag Group		\$ 100.00
Little House Group	\$ 11.64	\$ 36.64

Financials continued on page 4

Wrightwood		
Wed. Mens Stag		\$ 720.00
Mon. Womens	\$ 42.50	\$ 135.50
12 X 12 HWY. 2 RGP		\$ 36.00
9 a.m. Sun. Open Participation	\$ 180.00	\$ 478.80
Buck of the month		
Harold H	\$ 3.84	
Floyd H	\$ 20.00	

There was no Intergroup Meeting held for the Month of October.

A “shortcoming” is like a flat tire.

A “character defect” is like driving on it.

— Anonymous, quote taken from: <https://i.pining.com/736x/58/83/af/5883af85010e4a7569f3225d26d3d958--alcoholics-anonymous-quotes-flat-tire.jpg>

Tradition 11 Checklist

1. Do I sometimes promote AA so fanatically that I make it seem unattractive?
2. Am I always careful to keep the confidences reposed in me as an AA member?
3. Am I careful about throwing AA names around—even within the Fellowship?
4. Am I ashamed of being a recovered, or recovering, alcoholic?
5. What would AA be like if we were not guided by the ideas in Tradition Eleven? Where would I be?
6. Is my AA sobriety attractive enough that a sick drunk would want such a quality for himself?

These questions were originally published in the Grapevine in conjunction with a series of articles on the Twelve Traditions that ran from November 1969 to September 1971.

Taken from: No Booze News, AA Midwest, November 2017, www.aamesaz.org

CENTRAL OFFICE STATISTICS

	SEPT*	OCT	Y.T.D.
Visitors	79	62	735
Information Calls	115	125	1119
12-Step Calls	1	1	10

CALL FORWARDNG

Information Calls	84	1084	965
12 Step Calls	1	15	13

TOTALS

Information Calls	199	2304	2084
12 Step Calls	2	25	23

*Totals reported in last month’s Newsletter for September’s Central office statistics were incorrect. Above are September’s corrected numbers and October’s updated numbers.

The Central Office will be closed:

Thursday, Nov. 23rd—Thanksgiving

Monday, December 25th—Christmas

Monday, January 1st—New Year’s Day



Image Source: Microsoft Publisher Clip Art

If you would like to receive or send news to the newsletter, please contact us here:
newsletterforthefellowship@yahoo.com