



Common Grounds

Oregon Area 58 Volume 52 Issue 4 www.aa-oregon.org

Next Area Assembly
May 17-19, 2019
District 17
200 N 7th St
Klamath Falls

"Indecision with the passing
of time becomes decision."

Bill W

Coming events

newsletter@aa-oregon.org

District 8 Presents
March 30, 2019
"12 Step Calls"

Workshop

2191 Birch Ave

Church of God, Reedsport
(downstairs)

www.aaoregondistrict8.com

District 16

12 Traditions & Concepts
Facilitated Workshops

3-18-19

5:30 pm - 7:00

2825 E Barnett Rd,
Medford, OR

Terry C. call or text her at
541-690-2360.

Hotline Experience

Earlier this summer I had a health scare that required me to be on bed rest for an unknown amount of time. Not only did I have to put my job and most of my life on hold, I needed to resign my position as Tuesday secretary for my home group. In working with my sponsor, I expected to get a hall pass on all things program related — unity, recover and service — despite having heard over and over again that anything we put before our sobriety we can expect to lose. My sponsor had none of it and worked with me to figure out how to stay connected despite what was happening in my life.

My last Sunday meeting before checking in to the hospital, it was announced that the AA hotline was looking for volunteers. I tapped Mac on the shoulder during a break. "I'm in," I said. "What do I need to do?" Mac assigned me a 9 PM — 9 AM shift, sent me information about how to field calls, answered all of my questions and walked me through what to expect. I was off to the proverbial races.

One night, after months in the hospital and with a brand new baby at home, the phone rang just as she started to cry. I was pissed. I was annoyed. I was so, so very tired. The last thing I wanted to do was answer the phone, an unknown drunk on the other end of the line, at 11 PM. My husband picked up our daughter and I hit the green button on my phone.

"Hello." It was more of a statement than a greeting.

"Um, hi."

"Oh, uh, this is the AA hotline," I said. "Can I help you?"

"I think I might have a problem with alcohol and I think I might need help."

"Why don't you tell me a little bit about yourself and how I can be of service to you."

He started to talk. There was a full moon out the window casting light and shadows on the street outside. It was beautiful. He started talking and as he did so a familiar feeling came over me. I gave a side-line, half-joking, half-snide, half-okay-okay look to my higher power.

Each sentence that came out of his mouth was my story. He told me about how he wanted to stop drinking and would do anything at all but AA — including fail. Then, it turns out, failing to stop drinking was no longer an option either. He told me about his problems with the language in the Big Book. He told me that the program might work if he could just find the right sponsor. Anything, anything at all except surrendering and trying to work the actual program for real.

I thanked my HP for the help in not leaving before the miracle happened. I took a very deep breath and understood. Maybe my words helped him, but I definitely needed to hear the words that proceeded to come out of my mouth.

"It doesn't really matter how smart we are. If we want to recover from the hopeless state of mind and body, we need to work the program. Being smart won't help us here." The conversation was not a long one. I asked him if he was willing to not drink before going to a meeting in the morning. I asked him if he wanted a ride. I helped him find a meeting to go to. I said that we are here for him if he wants to get sober. There is a whole community of people who are here to and need to help those willing to accept it.

The words that came out of my mouth that night were, or are, not mine. They are the words passed down through generations of alcoholics helping other alcoholics. They belong to all of us.

Repeating those words I remembered who I was and who I am now, how much has changed for me in so little time.

Repeating those words left me with the "fall to my knees" gratitude that I get to walk this path to recovery with all of you here in Central Oregon and, really, the world.

Our global community. And, as with so much in AA, at a time in my life when I desperately needed to be of service, the hotline was there for me.

The hotline served as my lifeline to the heart of AA. Someone once told me that every day he says a prayer for anyone who needs it. The AA hotline is the living, breathing practice of that prayer.

May all who need us find us as it is we, also, who need them. And, lastly, thank you for the opportunity to write this story. It is helping me stay sober today so that I have the opportunity to stay sober tomorrow. One day at a time, together we roll.

Peace, Margi



Behind the Walls

Step 12

Joshua W. Mill Creek A.A. GSR

My story starts like this:

I was presented with a rare opportunity to work my 12th step in hopes to carry on the A.A. message. Placed in this unique situation as if it was almost a plan laid out for me of a higher power's doing of course. This past July 1 asked the administration to allow me to chair A.A. meetings in my place of employment for the inmates that reside in MHU in the death row building, therefore completing my twelfth step. Those of you unfamiliar with MHU it's in the death row building. This unit contains inmates/patients unsuitable for main line activity. In this HMYU unit these inmates are treated like patients. Processing through counseling, observations and some testing for mental stability to be placed into ICH (Intensive Care Housing) This is a less restrictive environment for them to progress where they can interact with others until appropriate for General Population.

Thankfully the administration agreed to A.A. meetings for those individuals. Although nonetheless way too soon. There seems to have been a problem within the administration allowing me to continue working around restrained inmates while I was not restrained. Even though this job position has operated like that for quite some time. It has now just become an issue. The door on the opportunity for these inmates for a chance at A.A. , a chance at hopefully changing the way they think as well, has sadly been closed simply not

allowing me to bring the A.A. message to these people, which I feel would have been the ultimate achievement. An achievement that could have started positive progress in these individuals lives, beginning with them feeling better about themselves and possibly beginning to feel human again.

Prior to A.A., I was myself just as they were. I felt non-human like, numb. After sometime in A.A., here within these walls, I began recognizing a lot of characteristics of myself that I needed to change. Only after reading about those characteristics I began making major changes within myself. I started not only feeling, but also seeing differences within myself. I started feeling just a bit more positive, more human little by little. Unfortunately these individuals will not get the chance to hear the A.A. message, a chance to look at their character defects, also a chance at feeling human again and a chance at telling a sense of belonging. So I say, I tried to carry the A.A. message and almost succeeded. Good thing the twelfth step doesn't say you must succeed.

So, the message I am trying to carry to those of you is consider your path, be sure not to allow things to divert you. I'm still going to carry the A.A. message regardless. I need to carry the message to the inmates on death row. Maybe my path comes later; maybe it's not a path at all but simply this GSR position within this club.

*Lifers's Unlimited Club
Oregon State Penitentiary*

Online Resources

There are many online resources for your service work.



This link will take you to all PSA's

www.aa.org/pages/en_US/videos-and-audios#video-player

Accessibilities Resources

www.aa.org/pages/en_US/accessibilities-committees

CPC Resources

www.aa.org/pages/en_US/cooperation-with-the-professional-community-cpc-committees

Archives Resources

www.aa.org/pages/en_US/archives-committees

Corrections Resources

www.aa.org/pages/en_US/corrections-committees

Public Information Resources

www.aa.org/pages/en_US/public-information-committees

Tradition 10

Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issue
hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into pub

I have been meditating on tradition 10 and I have to ask myself what "outside issues" mean to me. When I arrived to the rooms of AA I was full of resentments that I accepted as being normal to my way of thinking. One of my resentments was of people whose sexual preferences was different than mine. In my past I had some bad experiences in my childhood to birth and foster these resentments. I was really convinced that I was justified in the way I thought about this. My Christian education affirmed this way of thinking as I was reading literature to protect what I felt was my right to feel.

Early in the program I was asked to go a concert with someone who treated me nicely and I was considering to ask this person to sponsor me. A little while later this person spoke as a speaker and shared that he was gay. With my past experience in mind I distanced from this person and didn't think much more of this till later in my sobriety. Later on, God has a way of putting the problem in front of me and so He placed an alternate life-style couple in the meetings I went to. I didn't like these people because of my past and once again I was powerless over the way I felt. By this time in sobriety I knew I had a resentment that I had to deal with about this matter. Thank God for the steps and the action produced by them. One more time God did for me what I could not do for myself. He changed the way I thought about this and I become more accepting of people that thought differently than I did.

Coming into AA I had strong Christian beliefs and felt I was a step ahead of the I common folks that didn't share my beliefs. When the topic of a higher power was discussed in the meetings I attended, I had no problem putting a name to my higher power. For me as I learned later on, this was an old idea I had to let go

I had no clue the damage I was doing to myself and the people I was attending meetings with by naming my high power. Not adhering to the traditions or the suggestions of the program I put up a wall around me without realizing what I was doing. With time in the program I learned that my beliefs were an outside issue that tradition 10 was talking about. As a member of AA sharing my beliefs other than using AA verbiage had no place in the rooms. AA is not a platform to share my beliefs with those I attend meetings with.

What do the preceding paragraphs have in common you might ask. To me they are good examples of outside issues that tradition 10 addresses. We all come into AA with varied experience of hurts and resentments and selfishness is the root of our problem. A lot of times our identities are hinged to outside issues when we arrive. Our identities are not the problem, but the importance we place on them is. This is where we have to remember Tradition 3 "The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking." This implies that any belief system is welcome in AA as an outside issue. We identify as alcoholics first and our beliefs systems or identities are gradually left outside of the meetings as we grow in our sobriety. We have different flavor in our meetings for peoples varied growth in the program with the ultimate goal being, we are all God's children and we need to learn to treat all people accordingly.

continued

This brings us to the all important in the third leg of the triangle which represent service. To actually accomplish living in service you have to strive to have good leadership qualities which I lacked when I first landed in the A.A. rooms. Love and tolerance are our code, and to model that in this area takes great vision by our leaders. These are pretty extreme examples of outside issues and it takes a through understanding of the twelve traditions and concepts to arrive at something that will work for both sides involved. As A.A. members or leaders we need to place ourselves in the other persons shoes and above all stop judging

I have found in sobriety I don't understand the hurt of other people till I experience the hurt myself. We all got our burdens to carry and we all have been hurt. The leadership qualities of "give and take" or compromise when we don't agree in our "all or nothing thinking" becomes paramount when we face issues like this in our sobriety. We need to learn to comprise in the direction of unity as a whole fellowship. Some times it is better for others and me to keep my mouth shut. If I am really solid in my beliefs I don't need the assurance of others to keep my conscious contact with my higher power.

In AA we learn to put differences aside to address our common problem of our alcoholism. Hopefully we do this keeping in mind that love and tolerance as our code. I am still a Christian but my understanding of what

being a good Christian has changed dramatically thanks to the help of the people in A.A. I wasn't a very good Christian when I came through the doors of AA but I have progressed steadily with the help of the steps of the program and my higher power. In AA we learn to live as example's for the people that come behind us, so every one of us are leaders in service to some degree. Outside issues if not checked by good leadership in service arm of A.A. could affect our unity to function together. By their very nature these two outside issues that were addressed can not be dealt with the dualistic thinking mindset.

The thinking most alcoholics arrive with that is either "all or nothing." As good leaders in AA no matter what the level, we have to have good vision of the future, keeping in mind our singleness of purpose. Good leaders lead by example, not by protecting their perceived rights or if you prefer their identities. In AA we want to welcome all alcoholics, all identities, keeping in mind the bigger picture, sometimes our outside issues are not compatible with each other. As a good leader in AA it is my job to act in such a way that makes it easier for people with issues that differ from mine to love me. The statement principles before personalities becomes relevant as personalities (identities, issues) become the main deterrent to unity. A good leader in the service arena has the capacity to act in the best interest for all members of AA putting beside personal beliefs for the good of all.

Anonymous

Next Newsletter Topic Suggestion

"How I got involved in Service"



OREGON AREA 58 BULLETIN: Do you want to send an article? Articles should focus on stories, group news, district news, or other reports on service activities in Oregon Area 58. We may edit your presentation for formatting purposes.

Please send them to Newsletter
Chairperson, Cindee S.
by the cutoff date, 5-3-19

**Please send text, not
PDF format for articles**

Send an e-mail to the
newsletter@aa-oregon.org and use the
heading of the topic:
"Newsletter Submission"

*Please submit articles by
May 3, 2019*

newsletter@aa-oregon.org

Seventh Tradition Contributions can be
Mailed to:

Oregon Area General Service
Committee
1900 NE 3rd St, Ste 106-172
Bend OR 97701

Or Online at
**[http://www.aa-oregon.org/finance-
committee/](http://www.aa-oregon.org/finance-committee/)**