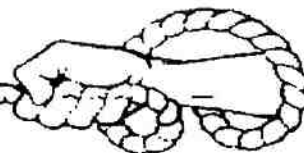


Lifeline



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Orange
County
Intergroup
Association

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The Intergroup Meeting has found a temporary home for October –February. We have been meeting at Church of the Foothills @19211 Dodge Avenue @Newport Blvd. in Tustin. (Thomas Guide p800-E7.)

The Special Events Committee is having a planning meeting on February 13th @ 7PM at the Garden Grove Alano Club, 9845 Belfast. Debbie M. is the Chairman. This is planning for all fun activities this year.

STEP TWO – FAITH AND TRUST

In the Second Step we “*Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.*”

That word “believe.” Isn’t it just the very beginning of our spiritual awakening that holds such an important place in the Program way down in the Twelfth Step? Just as there are many words and sentences between these two Steps isn’t there perhaps quite a broad mental expanse between that first belief and our eventual complete and thorough awakening to the spiritual power of AA?

For how do we use the word “believe” in normal, every-day conversation? “I believe you’re right”-- meaning: “Why, that’s so, I hadn’t thought of it that way before.” Not a very strong expression of opinion, perhaps merely a cautious admission that the person who we are talking with at the moment has made a good point.

Some of us doubtless took the Second Step in just this way--But as time went on our tentative belief became strengthened: we *were* being restored to sanity, the fog *was* rolling back, and things *were* beginning to shape up. Our belief became faith--and we found “faith” a much stronger word. “I have faith in that man;” “a faithful friend;” “a faith that will move mountains;”--stronger phrases these, that imply we now have found something we can cling to, something in which to set our teeth. Faith in our fellow man is restored to us, faith in the world about us; we begin to have faith in ourselves, to realize that this thing can be done, that by faith in a Higher Power we can become sober and stay that way. A rather wonderful word, “faith.”

But there is a yet finer word to add to our daily vocabulary: “Trust.” Just as we said above: “I have faith in that man” so now we decide: “I put my trust in him.” And by capitalizing just one letter of the alphabet we at last accomplish what many of us feel the Second Step urges us to do: “My trust is in Him.”

When we were very young didn’t we place our trust in our mothers, our fathers? As we wandered afield in our alcoholic journeys this trust was forgotten--but a Power greater than ourselves never forgot us. Perhaps we do not yet fully realize that we are being offered the chance to develop a trust even greater than that we bore our parents, who possibly are

no longer with us to guide and encourage us. But that Higher Power is *always* with us, if we but search Him out. He will restore us to sanity if we have a believing faith that He, in turn, trusts us.

Anon, Boston MA Reprinted from the Grapevine, Dec. 1950

TRADITION TWO -THERE'S JUST ONE 'ULTIMATE AUTHORITY'

For our group purpose, there is but one ultimate authority ... a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants ... they do not govern.

When I was very new in recovery, a gang of men and women in my home group formed an outfit called the Vagabonds. We went out to dinner and a meeting one night a month. There were a dozen of us and each month a different member would pick a restaurant and a meeting for our visit.

On one such visit -- I think we went to Radford House in the Valley -- a woman named "Alabam" said that God gave Alcoholics Anonymous the Twelve Steps to keep us from killing ourselves and then gave us the Twelve Traditions to keep us from killing each other. Any inspection of the Traditions will bear out this wisdom immediately.

Time after time over the past two decades, Tradition 2 has opened my eyes to a number of beautiful realities. When this Tradition told me there was only one "ultimate authority" in A.A., the language made it clear that there would be no bosses, no hotshots, no power trippers telling me what I should do. As a result, I get to pick the meetings I attend, how I dress when I attend those meetings, who I get to attend them with and a number of other issues that had previously troubled me.

I shouldn't have worried about it since it was like meeting an old friend. It turned out that the "ultimate authority" Tradition 2 is talking about is the same Higher Power I had trusted with restoring me to sanity in Step 2, the same loving God I had turned my will and my life over to in Step 3.

As was the case with Tradition 1, all of the Traditions are here to guard and insure the continued health and well-being of the program of Alcoholics Anonymous. With unity in place and authority delegated, the rest of the Traditions care for major facets of the life of recovery. Next month, we'll review the requirements for membership which many of our members regard as far too minimal.

George L., Westminster

CONCEPT TWO

The General Service Conference of A.A. has become, for nearly every practical purpose, the active voice and the effective conscience of our whole Society in its world affairs.

What it was like:

In the early days of AA, Bill and Bob made all the decisions about how to create over-all services, which could spread the AA message worldwide. They held the final responsibility and the immediate authorization to get the program underway and keep it going.

In 1937, Bob delegated almost all of his responsibility and authority to Bill. Bill then looked for trusted friends to help him. In 1938 the Alcoholic Foundation was founded as a small trusteeship of AA members and non-alcoholic friends. They handled all the money matters and, as time went on, the literature publication, public relations, the AA Grapevine and office operations. Finally the trustees were in full legal charge of all AA's operations, with Bill in a respected advisory position.

Bill wrote, "*Notwithstanding these delegations, Dr. Bob and I did quite properly feel that we still held an ultimate responsibility to A.A. and to the future, for the proper organization and structuring of our A.A. world services. If anything were to go wrong with them, we would be held accountable, because the groups still looked to us, rather than to their then little known Trustees, for leadership in A.A.'s world affairs.*"

"In the course of these developments the great difference between ultimate and immediate service authority became apparent."

What happened:

Bill realized that the entire responsibility for the well being of AA could not be turned over to self-appointed (and virtually unknown) Trustees, no matter how well meaning and devoted they might be. The question then arose, who could take the place of the founders in taking ultimate service authority, responsibility and leadership when the founders were gone?

It was decided to turn these legacies over to the groups, but how would the groups, who accepted this responsibility, administer it? It became apparent that a manageable number of delegates, representing the groups and who now form the core of the General Service Conference, could assume the ultimate sanction in matters of large importance. The Trustees would serve along with the Delegates in the conference, but the Trustees would not be alone in shouldering the responsibilities.

In 1955 at the AA convention in St. Louis, Bill and Bob turned these responsibilities over to all the AA groups then in existence and into the future.

What it's like now:

The General Service Conference, which meets once a year and works throughout the year, is meant to be a representative cross section of our entire fellowship. It is the active voice and the effective conscience of our whole Society in its world affairs.

Delegates to the Conference are elected by General Service Representatives (GSRs) and other trusted servants from each of 93 Delegate Areas in the U.S. and Canada. Each group is entitled to send a GSR to elect these delegates, because Bill and Bob personally turned the fellowship over to the groups.

The fact is, there are more than 1,800 reported groups in the Mid-Southern California Delegate Area. In my general service experience over the past 24 years, I have seldom seen more than 100 groups represented by GSRs at Area Assemblies. Less than 5%!

Bill said, *"In making this momentous transfer, we old-timers deeply hope that we have avoided those pitfalls into which societies have so often fallen because their originators have failed, during their lifetimes, to properly delegate and distribute their own authority, responsibility, and leadership."*

Bill and Bob delegated their own authority, responsibility and leadership to the groups. Are the groups living up to their legacy? Does it matter?

Linda C.
District 18
MSCA Area 09

SERVICE IN THE GROUP –

THE BEGINNING OF HUMILITY

Number 2 in a continuing series on A.A. Service

Everyone in A.A. remembers their first service to the Group. Coffee-maker, greeter, butt-picker (for those smoking meetings) clean-up, etc. Some kind of menial job that we knew didn't begin to challenge our vast capabilities - a job which we absolutely loved because the Group had confidence that we could do the job - a job that we hated the 3rd time we had to do it and couldn't wait until we could go on to a more prestigious job. Some of us were even elected to be Group Secretary, if no one else would do it, (an all too-common occurrence). Some of us were elected to be General Service Representatives, when the effort of stringing three multi-syllable words together, (such as General Service Representative) was still painful and confusing.

But we did what we were asked to do. We didn't know why, but it somehow seemed important to our sobriety. We showed up early. We stayed late. We got in our sponsor's car and went on panels, (as observers until we had the pre-requisite sobriety). We fearfully

went to one of those Intergroup or District meetings and just knew that everyone else knew what they were doing, and we held little hope of that ever happening for us. We met people who actually seemed to enjoy showing up early for meetings and staying late to help clean up. We thought they were all crazy when they came near to blows at a business meeting and then laughed and went out for coffee when the meeting was over. "It must be some strange mental illness!" we thought.

Maybe they made us a Literature Person, and we were impressed because we thought they thought we might actually be able to read. Then we found out that it was just because no one else had a car to go the Central Office and pick up literature. So we went to the Central Office and we saw a wealth of literature, and we bought some really interesting-looking pamphlets and booklets and took them back to our Groups, knowing the Group would be grateful for our intellect and instincts in purchasing this literature that would be read and re-read many times over by the Group members.

And year after year, we saw the pamphlets and booklets sit in the literature rack gathering dust. Every now and then our hearts leapt as someone selected the pamphlet out of the literature rack and we thought, "Man, are you going to be happy you picked that piece up!" But then, they turned the pamphlet over and wrote their name and phone number on the back of the pamphlet for a newcomer.

And then, after years of sobriety, we picked the pamphlet up and read it ourselves and found out it really WAS informative and useful reading. And we castigated ourselves for not having read it when we were the Literature person, so we could spotlight it in our literature report. But we got all over the current literature person saying that they should actually read some of the literature they were reporting on each week.

When I was made coffee-person with one week of sobriety, I promised myself that I would be the best coffee-maker that the Group had ever elected. They would make me coffee-person emeritus. Didn't happen! People constantly complained about the coffee: where's the decaf; how come we don't have low-cal sweetener; it's too strong; it's too weak; we should have bigger cups; we should have smaller cups; can we get some of those flavored creams?; you should make more coffee - we ran out; you should make less coffee - you always have to throw some away; ad infinitum.

But we did what we were asked to do - and that simple act kept us here long enough to see the real purpose of A.A. - carrying the message of A.A. to the alcoholic who still suffers. And, in the end, we found

that we had actually become grateful for having had the opportunity to be of service. Who'da thought it!!
A member of A.A. in Orange County

"HAVE WE LOST OUR SINGLENESSE OF PURPOSE"

The Washingtonians and the Oxford Groups are prime examples of two entities that lost their way because they got into so many other things, instead of staying focused on their primary singleness of purpose. It has been stated that if AA gets destroyed it will be destroyed from within. The Steps in part help keep us together; the Traditions help keep this program from following the same paths as the Washingtonians and the Oxford groups of the past.

We as members of Alcoholics Anonymous have an obligation to teach the newcomer about every aspect of this program, and that includes those 12 principles that the quote, unquote drug addict does not want to hear, because he or she can not talk about drugs in a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous. That is why there are 12 step programs all over the place for whatever ails you. We also have a pamphlet that I am sure most people have either not seen, or even taken the time to read. Even if they have seen it, they toss it aside because it does not say what they want to hear. The pamphlet is called "Problems Other Than Alcohol". In this conference approved piece of literature one of the questions asks, can an addict be a member of Alcoholics Anonymous? The answer is no. In another part it says can an addict who has an alcohol problem be a member of AA? The answer is yes as long as his primary problem is freedom from alcohol.

In our third tradition, it states that any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an AA group, provided they have no other affiliation. In addition, of course, do not forget tradition 5, the group's primary purpose is to help the Alcoholic that still suffers. I was told years ago that when you stand for the traditions be prepared to stand alone.

Well there are a lot of us that are standing alone, because we believe in what Alcoholics Anonymous is, and what it does for a drunk like me. One of the most irresponsible statements that I keep hearing is "A Drug is a Drug is a Drug." That is a very dangerous statement because they are not the same thing. I want AA to be here for my children, and my grandchildren if they ever need it, but that will not happen if we do not stay focused on that primary spiritual aim, that our big book tells us, and the program teaches us.

We need to remember that there is that pure alcoholic still out there. Some of you may not believe that, but he's still there, and if he walks into a room of

AA and all he hears is how somebody slams a needle in his arm, he will say I do not belong here, and turn around, and walk away. It is not just him that loses -- it's us too. If you do not understand what an open and closed meeting is, read the AA Group pamphlet. An open meeting does not mean that it is a free for all, and anyone can share. I walked away from my home group because they got away from the singleness of purpose. So if you have a meeting where you allow anybody to participate, look at that because what you are teaching people is that it's ok. Then you have someone who will take it to another meeting because they were not educated. This is how it affects other groups and AA as a whole.

So when I get called a Traditions thumper, or the Traditions police, I take that as a compliment. That means we who are called those things are doing our job to uphold these traditions, and because we care. Therefore, if there is a meeting out there that is doing those things, call yourself anything else, but do not call yourself AA.

In conclusion, read the long form of the Traditions because it gets into more detail of what this is all about. When people just read the short form that is all they know. Remember we can not transmit something we haven't got, so for those of you that jump all over the quote unquote Tradition thumper, investigate. Find out why people like me do what we do.

*Scott R. Anaheim - Alt. DCMC District 10
November 27, 2005*

GOD IS IN CHARGE OF MY LIFE - AND MY CAMARO

I know this because I have been sober consecutively since September 2, 1995. When I stopped drinking, I did not believe in my heart that I was really an alcoholic. I just thought, "Well, I don't like where I might end up if I keep going, so I'll stop now."

Then in November, some really hard things happened in my life and all I wanted was to just get drunk and never stop again. I felt that my life was OVER, and there was no point in staying sober. That's when God stepped in, in the person of my best, non-alcoholic friend and a chain and leather clad member of another fellowship, sharing at the Alano Club that my friend took me to. This man was talking about his trouble and how his God was walking him through stuff. He said, "God is in charge, and he won't abandon me now."

Standing in the back of that room, I felt all the fear just drain out of me. I knew then that I am an alcoholic AND that God would keep me sober and walk with me through all the hard stuff I had to face. The only

