

UNITY NEWSLETTER



DECEMBER 2022 Volume 46; Issue 12

“Here are the steps we took” **by Clarence Snyder** **Working With Others**

Dr. Bob Smith sponsored Clarence Snyder into this simple program. Clarence repeated this approach with other alcoholics in Cleveland where he achieved a high recovery rate. Here is the approach the A.A. pioneers used to carry the message to the person who suffers from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body. Clarence remained very active in A.A. until his death in March 1984.



“Having had a spiritual experience as the result of those steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.”

There are five phases to the Twelve Steps:

- STEP 1: ADMISSION,
- STEPS 2 and 3: SUBMISSION,
- STEPS 4, 5, 6, and 7: CONFESSION,
- STEPS 8 and 9: RESTITUTION,
- STEPS 10, 11, and 12: THE LIVING STEPS, CONSTRUCTION, AND MAINTENANCE

STEP TWELVE: A spiritual awakening is THE RESULT of working, doing, and LIVING, ALL of the 12 Steps! Then you have this message to carry to others. There is no message unless you have done the first 9 Steps and are living the last three. You can't give what you don't have. You must practice these principles in ALL your affairs.

Now it is your responsibility to give this message to others as you have received it. Not changed, watered down, or how others may want it in their lives. If they want what you have, they must do what you did. It is now your legacy to hand down, AS IT WAS GIVEN TO YOU — NO OTHER WAY! It is recommended that two people work with the newcomer through the steps whenever possible, so that both may learn as well as give.

There is no easier, softer way — this is it. This is the PROGRAM OF RECOVERY as it was in the 1930's in Ohio, as Dr. Bob gave it. You can and DO recover, you don't have to stay sick — you can and do get WELL!!! This is the solution; this is HOW IT WORKS.

Don't trudge the Happy Road to Recovery; walk with your head high, knowing that through you, God will help others to RECOVER as you have. May God bless and be with you.

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Step Twelve: “Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics and to practice these principles in all our affairs.”

THE joy of living is the theme of A.A.'s Twelfth Step, and action is its key word. Here we turn outward toward our fellow alcoholics who are still in distress. Here we experience the kind of giving that asks no rewards. Here we begin to practice all Twelve Steps of the program in our daily lives so that we and those about us may find emotional sobriety. When the Twelfth Step is seen in its full implication, it is really talking about the kind of love that has no price tag on it.

Our Twelfth Step also says that as a result of practicing all the Steps, we have each found something called a spiritual awakening. To new A.A.'s, this often seems like a very dubious and improbable state of affairs. “What do you mean when you talk about a 'spiritual awakening'?” they ask.

Twelfth Step Prayer: Dear God, my spiritual awakening continues to unfold. With the help I have received I shall have the opportunity to grow. I am grateful. I pray most humbly to continue walking day by day, practice the principles of this way of life in all I do and say. I need You, my friends, and the program every hour of every day. This is a better way to live.



Tradition Twelve (long form):

And finally, we of Alcoholics Anonymous believe that the principle of anonymity has an immense spiritual significance. It reminds us that we are to place principles before personalities; that we are to practice a genuine humility. This to the end that our great blessings may never spoil us; that we shall forever live in thankful contemplation of Him who presides over us all.

Tradition Twelve Checklist:

1. Why is it good idea for me to place the common welfare of all AA members before individual welfare? What would happen to me if AA as a whole disappeared?
2. When I do not trust AA's current servants, who do I wish had the authority to straighten them out?
3. In my opinions of and remarks about other AAs, am I implying membership requirements other than a desire to stay sober?
4. Do I ever try to get a certain AA group to conform to my standards, not its own?
5. Have I a personal responsibility in helping an AA group fulfill its primary purpose? What is my part?
6. Does my personal behavior reflect the Sixth Tradition—or belie it?
7. Do I do all I can do to support AA financially? When is the last time I anonymously gave away a Grapevine subscription?
8. Do I complain about certain AAs' behavior—especially if they are paid to work for AA? Who made me so smart?
9. Do I fulfill all AA responsibilities in such a way as to please privately even my own conscience? Really?
10. Do my utterances always reflect the Tenth Tradition, or do I give AA critics real ammunition?
11. Should I keep my AA membership a secret, or reveal it in private conversation when that may help another alcoholic (and therefore me)? Is my brand of AA so attractive that other drunks want it?
12. What is the real importance of me among more than a million AAs?



Concept XII and Checklist: The Conference shall observe the spirit of A.A. tradition, taking care that it never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds and reserve be its prudent financial principle; that it place none of its members in a position of unqualified authority over others; that it reach all important decisions by discussion, vote, and, whenever possible, by substantial unanimity; that its actions never be personally punitive nor an incitement to public controversy; that it never perform acts of government, and that, like the Society it serves, it will always remain democratic in thought and action.

- How do we guard against becoming a “seat of perilous wealth or power”?
- How do we practice prudent use of our Seventh Tradition contributions and literature revenue?
- Do we insure the spiritual liberties of all A.A. members by not placing any member in the position of absolute authority over others?
- Do we try to reach important decisions by thorough discussion, vote and, where possible, substantial unanimity?
- As guardians of A.A.'s traditions, are we ever justified in being personally punitive?
- Are we careful to avoid public controversy?
- Do we always try to treat each other with mutual respect and love?

A.A. Oldtimers...On the Twelfth Step

A.A. Grapevine, October 1945, Vol. 2 No. 5

“Having had a spiritual experience as the result of those steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.”

Very few of us know the exact hour and date we had our spiritual experience, and some of us are not conscious of ever having had one at all. However, our changed personalities and perspectives are definite proof that “something” happened to us somewhere along the line as those who knew us “when” will attest.

A.A.s refer to the 12th Step as “working with others,” and this means we try to help the other person work out his or her problem. From our vast fund of knowledge on the subject, gained from our own actual experiences and often under similar conditions, we are peculiarly qualified to exercise that sympathetic understanding that only another alcoholic can have and which is so important in talking to a person who, like ourselves, is allergic to alcohol. This is the crux of the success obtained by groups throughout the country. This A.A. program, which is responsible for our own sobriety, and for giving us a new lease on life, was handed to us on a silver platter and without monetary cost. It is our bounden duty, therefore, to pass it on in the same manner to those who want it. It was not intended for us to keep to ourselves.

We are admonished to, “Go ye and spread the gospel,” and Webster defines gospel as: “Any doctrine concerning human welfare that is agitated as of great importance.” Surely, to us alcoholics it is of the utmost importance. We carry out the 12th Step when we share our gift by telling others of the help we have found, by lending encouragement to those who find the way difficult, by making calls when requested to, and by attending meetings to show to the sensitive newcomer that he or she is not alone.

Sobriety, however, is not enough and length of sobriety is not so important as quality of sobriety. The A.A. program is a design for living normal, happy lives, and it is necessary that we practice the principles of tolerance, patience, unselfishness, humility, and that we curb our all too human desire to criticize and bear resentment.

It is sometimes discouraging to talk to a person who does not immediately respond to our “pearls of wisdom,” but right there is where we exercise patience and realize that once the seed has been sown, John Barleycorn is our best salesman. Two years ago O.L. was called upon in New York City and after three or four meetings considered himself “cured,” and in no further need of association with the A.A. group. Last week I was called to a hospital here in Atlanta, to interview a patient who turned out to be my old friend O.L. who had sense enough to scream for A.A. and was now “ready” for the entire program. None of us can let our defenses down, for unless we keep everlastingly at it we are doomed.

Persons thank us for showing them the way, and relatives are inclined to credit one or another of us with the recovery of their loved one. It is then that we realize that “Of myself I am nothing” –and we thank the Power greater than ourselves for making us an instrument of His ways.

T. B., Atlanta, Georgia

DISTRICT MEETINGS

District 1 meets the first Saturday, every other month (Jan, Mar, May, etc.) at 11am at the Renaissance Center.

District 2 meets the second Thursday of the month at 6:30pm at the Mountain Home VA, Johnson City.

District 3 meets the first Sunday of the month at 12:30pm at the Morristown Group.

District 4 meets the first Sunday of even months at 2:00pm at Happy Destiny.

District 50/51 meets the first Monday of the month at 6:30pm at Intergroup.

Intergroup Committee meets the third Monday of the month at 6:30pm on Zoom. Meeting ID: 190 817 792; Password: 076583.

Want to do Service Work for Intergroup?

Use the form below, OR sign up online here:

<https://www.etiaa.org/contact-us/>

East Tennessee Intergroup of Alcoholics Anonymous – Gratitude With Service form

Return to: ETIAA; 9217 Park West Blvd #B3; Knoxville, TN 37923

865-522-9667

Manager@etiaa.org

www.etiaa.org

Date: _____ *First Name _____ Last Name _____

Address _____ *Phone _____

*City _____ *State _____ *ZIP _____ Sex _____

E-mail address _____ Alternative Phone _____

* Required for listing in 12th Step List

ETIAA UNITY Newsletter Subscription / Renewal (Free subscription for email issues; \$12/year for mailed issues)

Volunteer Service Options

Check only those you are willing to commit time to:

12th Step List Volunteer

Weeknights

Weekends

Weekdays

Phones Night & Weekend

Weeknights

Weekends

Committees of Interest

Check only those you are willing to serve on:

Public Information / Cooperation with the Professional Community

Intergroup Representative

Office Worker

Archives

Outreach

Spanish Liaison

THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS!

We can't do it without you! Intergroup volunteers help carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers, and provide groups and individuals with literature and other resources. It's a great gig! If you have at least 6 months of continued sobriety, come join us!

Fill out your info at the office, or online at <https://www.etiaa.org/contact-us/>.

In the Office

Jill	Patty	Dennis
Glenn	Eddie	Tara
Pete	Paul	Beth
Charlie	Kathy	Bruce
Bob	Rick	Marie
Robin	Fawn	Rob
Dave	Jacqueline	Mary

Website

Sterling
Eammon
SuZanne

Meeting List

Barb

Intergroup Board

Rhonda	Tami
Dave	Jacque
Marian	Jack F
Beth	Susie MacD
Barb	Jimmy MacD
Susi	

Hotline:

Clara	Randall
Bob W	Jack F
Emily	Miles
Anna	Karen C
Barb	
Patrick	
Austin	
Ron M.	

AA Birthdays / Anniversaries

Monday Night Men's Group

Douglas P.N.	19 years
Mark G.	17 years
Troy D.	3 years

Intergroup Office News

The Office will be closed Dec 24th-26th and Dec 31st-Jan 2nd

ETIAA is taking nominations for its standing committee in November and will be voting in December. The current open positions are:

- Vice Chair (no current nominations)
- Secretary (no current nominations)
- Spanish Liaison (no current nominations)
- CPC/PI (no current nominations)
- Accessibilities
- Outreach

These Officers help facilitate 12 step work in our area. They also help make decisions about the Intergroup Office. We are always excited to have new faces participate in Intergroup. For more information on how this all works, simply email manager@etiaa.org and we'll send you a link. We welcome all AA members!!

Service Work Opportunities

We need new service workers for our 12 Step List. These workers answer calls from people who need to talk to an AA member after they have been screened by the hotline worker. They usually need to talk to someone of the same sex about the program and potentially meet at a meeting.

We also need service workers to be backups on the hotline.

Contact us to find out how you can help us carry the message!

Unity Newsletter

is a monthly publication of East Tennessee Intergroup about, by, and for members of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA). Opinions herein are not to be attributed to AA. Except when indicated, this publication does not imply endorsement by either AA or the Newsletter. Delegates to the General Service Conference on April 24, 1972 agreed that the use of full names and addresses could improve communication within the Fellowship. Consequently, we may use full names for AA service members. To ensure anonymity, it is requested that the Newsletter be kept within the Fellowship.

Submissions

Is your group celebrating Birthdays/Anniversaries? Are you? Do you have AA-related questions or myths that Intergroup of East Tennessee Alcoholics Anonymous (ETIAA) can answer for you? Is there an "In Memory" group member to be recognized? We encourage all appropriate submissions by sending them to: Newsletter Coordinator, managr@etiaa.org

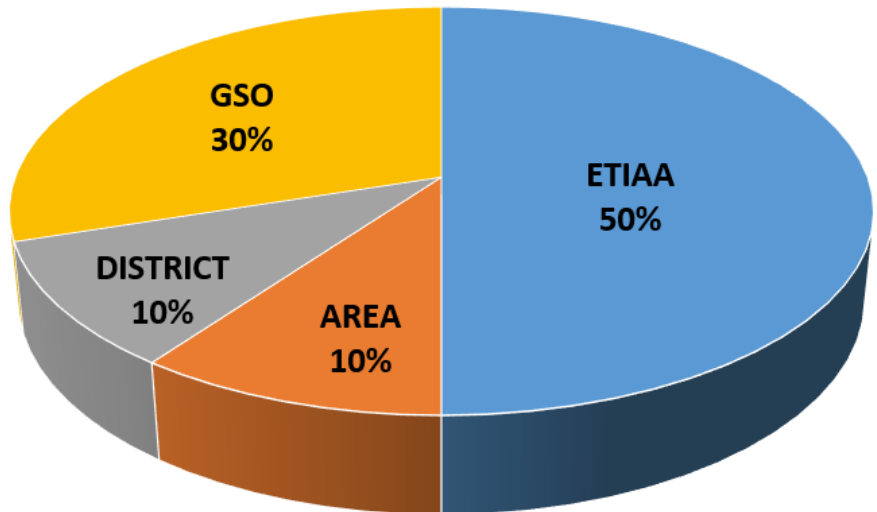
7TH TRADITION SUGGESTED CONTRIBUTIONS

How can groups participate?

To help support AA's essential services, the General Service Conference suggests that individual groups, through an informed group conscience, adopt a specific contribution plan tailored to meet the group's financial situation. Once the basic group expenses have been taken care of (for example, rent, refreshments, AA literature, Grapevine literature, local meeting lists, GSR travel expenses to attend service functions) and a "prudent reserve" has been set aside to cover any emergency contingencies that might arise, the group may decide to further carry the message by sending money to the following AA service entities.

- The local district, which communicates directly with the groups, providing the district group conscience for the area assemblies and serving as a link between the area delegates and the GSRs.
- The area committee, which coordinates vital AA activities over a broad geographic area, sends a delegate to the annual General Service Conference, holds area assemblies to determine the needs of the Fellowship, and provides information at all levels of service.
- The local intergroup or central office, which may provide phone service for Twelfth Step calls and other inquiries, coordination of group activities, AA literature sales, institutions work, public information, and cooperation with the professional community activities.
- AA's General Service Office, which functions as a storehouse of AA information, communicating with members and groups around the world, publishes AA literature, and supplies information and experience to professionals and others interested in AA.

[Self-Support—Where Money and Spirituality Mix. Go to: www.aa.org/assets/en_US/f-3_selfsupport.pdf]



Every AA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

Contribution Addresses

ETIAA East Tennessee Intergroup of AA
9217 Park West Blvd #B3
Knoxville, TN 37923
865-522-9667 www.etiaa.org

New ways to contribute:

Paypal Manager@etiaa.org or
 865-320-8649
 Zelle Manager@etiaa.org or
 865-320-8649
 Venmo @ETIAA

General Service Office
Grand Central Station
P.O. Box 459
New York, NY 10163
www.aa.org

The GSO prefers online contributions

Area 64 Assembly
2500 Murfreesboro Pike
Suite 105 Box 235
Nashville, TN 37217
www.area64assembly.org

District 1 Treasurer
Barb Sapp
4137 Skyland Dr,
Kingsport, TN 37664

District 2 Treasurer
PO BOX 1872
Johnson City, TN 37605

District 3 Treasurer
John H.
1466 Darbee Dr.

Morristown, TN 37814

District 4 Treasurer
P.O. Box 6642
Maryville, TN 37802

District 6 Treasurer
Richard B.
105 Mariner Point
Clinton, TN 37716

NEW ADDRESSES

AA District 50/51 Treasurer
9217 Park West Blvd
Suite B-3 (ETIAA)
Knoxville, TN 37923

Please mail all District 50/51 contributions to the Intergroup Office. Specify on the check AND on the outside of the envelope that it is for district 50/51.

Please be sure to include your Group Name and Number.

Intergroup Financial / Contributions Report

GROUPS DONATING	Oct '22	Jul '21— Oct '22	GROUPS DONATING	Oct '22	Jul '21— Oct '22
1ST THINGS 1ST KNOXVILLE		1,168.09	NEW BEGINNINGS KNOXVILLE		6.72
4-WAY GROUP	50.00	100.00	NORTH GATLINBURG		141.84
4TH DIMENSION		300.00	NORTHSHORE		500.00
AREA 64 HOST COMMITTEE		90.00	ONLINE LUNCH BUNCH		50.50
BACK TO BASICS- OAK RIDGE		50.00	Paula A		1,000.00
BIG BOOK RECOVERY		25.00	PHOENIX GROUP		590.00
BLOUNT COUNTY GROUP	100.00	275.00	PRIMARY PURPOSE- OAK RIDGE		200.00
BREAKFAST CLUB	68.90	138.90	RIVERSIDE GROUP		860.95
COLONIAL GROUP	100.00	200.00	ROANE COUNTY UNITY	671.00	671.00
COLONIAL HEIGHTS		85.00	SAT. MRN'G BIG BOOK STUDY	1,212.25	1,212.25
CONCORD GROUP		40.00	SEYMOUR SHARING	326.50	526.78
CONTRIBUTION JAR	3.80	28.52	Square Customer	1,212.50	1,352.23
COOKIE GROUP		120.00	Stepping Through Sobriety		75.00
DANDRIDGE UNITY	22.00	22.00	STEPS FORWARD	55.00	55.00
FOUNTAIN CITY SERENITY	150.00	300.00	TELLICO VILLAGE		120.00
FREE AT LAST	126.00	126.00	The Jaywalkers		250.00
HAPPY DESTINY		150.00	TRI-STATE GROUP-HARROGATE		300.00
HIGH NOON ROGERSVILLE		100.00	TRUDGING THE ROAD		138.80
HIGH NOONERS-P40	500.00	1,000.00	TUESDAY NIGHT LOUDON		150.00
KODAK HWY 66		50.00	TURNIP PATCH		128.77
LAFOLLETTE-THERE IS HOPE	20.00	80.00	WEARS VALLEY GROUP		83.25
Lordy Lordy Event		1,059.19	WEST KNOXVILLE GROUP		358.00
LUNCH BUNCH- GREENEVILLE		122.00	TOTAL	\$4,617.95	\$14,400.79

East Tennessee Intergroup of AA fiscal year is July 1 -June 30



November 2022 Intergroup Meeting Minutes

Open with Serenity Prayer and monthly Tradition at 6:30.

Present via Zoom: - Tami D, Dave S., Clara M., Jimmy McD., Jack F., Jacque H., Rhonda, Allison, Scott S., Beth, Ken L., Dennis P., Mel, Matt, Dave, Trey M., Renee N., SuZanne A.

Groups Represented: TN Group, First Things First Group, West Knox Group, Sisters in Sobriety Group, Morristown Group.

Motion to accept previous minutes SuZanne A. Seconded by Jack F. All in favor.

Manager's Report – Clara M

- Welcome new IGRs – Clara welcomed new reps to the meeting. If you need anything reach out to the office manager @ 865-320-8649 or manager@etiaa.org.
- Remind – Clara asked for anyone wanting to be added to the Remind App for staying up-to-date with announcements and updates to add their contact information in the Zoom chat box.
- Service Worker Manual – Clara stated she is working on updating and revising the Service Worker binder.
- Grapevine Books – Clara ordered lots of the Grapevine books because prices are going up on these books in 2023.
- Clara will not be at the December IG meeting.
- 2023 – Clara stated that in early 2023 she will be working on improving the Square program with regard to inventory and how Square pairs with other software used in the office. She will also be working on getting the website shipping costs updated for large book purchases.

Treasurer's Report – Dave S.

- Group Contributions for October were good and this month's contributions are also looking good.
- Dave advised that the money for Marian's trip to the National Corrections Conference has been disbursed earlier this month.
- Motion to accept Treasurer's report by Clara M., seconded by Mell, all in favor.

Hotline – Jack F.

- Jack reported he has one new volunteer trained and working a shift.
- He stated that they have shorter shifts available that are only 4 hours long. Please let your groups know more volunteers needed and short shifts available.
- Jack advised he will be working on updating the 12 step call list in the upcoming months. He would like to put together a digital form to be completed through the Intergroup Website for those wanting to be included on the 12 step call list. He hopes the form's information would then auto-populate to the 12 Step Call list so that the list will not have to be manually updated every time someone wants to join the list. Clara stated there is already a service application on the website and she will get with Jack to see if this form can be utilized for this 12 step call list.

Service Workers – Dave S.

- Dave advised the Wednesday evening shift is no longer covered by Paul and Eddie has taken his place. Katie who works on Wednesday evenings also may be leaving as a volunteer and if so, we will need someone to fill that shift. A new volunteer Linda will be taking the open Thursday shift.
- Holiday Hours – For Christmas, the office will close from Dec 24th – 26th and re-open the 27th. For New Year's, the office will close from Dec 31st – Jan 2nd and re- open Jan 3rd.

Archives – Allison

- Allison reported there were two large totes of old Grapevines. One tote was kept and will be distributed locally to various facilities. The other tote was given to Beth and she will be collaborating with the Grapevine committee in District 3 for that tote of Grapevines to be distributed to facilities in District 3. Beth is the eastern pool rep for Area 64. Her territory spans from Bristol to Knoxville and the pool rep is responsible for distributing Grapevines to local treatment and corrections facilities.

November 2022 Intergroup Meeting Minutes (Cont.)

Website – Barb S. – not present

Accessibilities – open

Spanish Liaison – open

CPC/PI – open

Treatment – Jacque H.

- Jacque stated she will be attending the District 1 meeting next month.

Corrections – Marian G. – not present

Outreach – open

Events – Susie and Jimmy McD.

- Jimmy advised there are no events planned at this time.

Mobile Intergroup – Beth C. – not present

- Clara stated she attended the Halloween party in Morristown and that she sold more than anticipated. There is the Knoxville area Christmas Party to be held December 3rd at Trinity United Methodist Church. Mobile Intergroup will attend and there are two committed volunteers at this time. More volunteers are welcome to help. The party starts with eating at 6pm and Speaker at 7pm.

Old Business:

- By-Laws Review and Revisions – Mel stated the By-Laws committee met Oct 27th and discussed the first 8 articles, Nov 10th and discussed the 9th article. They are scheduled to meet again on December 1.
- Elections to take place in December, Nominations to take place in October and November. Positions up for election include:
 - * Vice-Chair – no nominations to date
 - * Secretary – no nominations to date
 - * Hotline Chair – Jack F nominated.
 - * Archives Chair – Allison nominated.
 - * Accessibilities Chair – Kelly nominated
 - * Outreach Chair – Ken L nominated
 - * Treatment Chair – Jacque H nominated

New Business:

- Trey M stated the CPC/PI committee in District 50/51 has a new website up and running at www.knoxaaainfo.com. The website includes information for the community about the service structure and committees with contact information for each committee. Website has links to Intergroup website, AA.org and also includes the hotline number. He also advised there is a new service meeting the last Wednesday of the month on zoom (link to the meeting and zoom information located on the website). This meeting is going through AA's history and in January they will begin going through the Traditions.
- Dave S stated he would like \$15 per office service worker (\$310 total) to purchase gift cards from either Dunkin Donuts or Starbucks to give the workers for Christmas. Dave made the motion, Scott S seconded, all in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 7:08 pm.

Next meeting to be held Monday, December 19th, at 6:30pm, both in person and on Zoom.

New Meetings:

Maryville 12 Step Meeting Returns

Open Discussion

Blount Memorial Hospital

907 E Lamar Alexander Pkwy, Maryville TN

Meets in the Auditorium

Ground Floor Entrance

1st door on the left



RECOVERY

AT

THE POINT

211 W. FIFTH AVE
KNOXVILLE, TN 37917



OD, OS, AA

FRIDAYS
7:00 PM

DESIGN FOR LIVING GROUP



WOMEN'S BIG BOOK STUDY

Starting June 5th

SUNDAYS @ 5:30

CONCORD UNITED

METHODIST CHURCH

Enter using 4 West Door

Contact Tami @ 865-310-4142

The Next Frontier: Emotional Sobriety

by Bill Wilson

I think that many oldsters who have put our AA "booze cure" to severe but successful tests still find they often lack emotional sobriety. Perhaps they will be the spearhead for the next major development in AA—the development of much more real maturity and balance (which is to say, humility) in our relations with ourselves, with our fellows, and with God.

Those adolescent urges that so many of us have for top approval, perfect security, and perfect romance—urges quite appropriate to age seventeen—prove to be an impossible way of life when we are at age forty-seven or fifty-seven. Since AA began, I've taken immense wallops in all these areas because of my failure to grow up, emotionally and spiritually. My God, how painful it is to keep demanding the impossible, and how very painful to discover finally, that all along we have had the cart before the horse! Then comes the final agony of seeing how awfully wrong we have been, but still finding ourselves unable to get off the emotional merry-go-round.

How to translate a right mental conviction into a right emotional result, and so into easy, happy, and good living—well, that's not only the neurotic's problem, it's the problem of life itself for all of us who have got to the point of real willingness to hew to right principles in all our affairs.

Even then, as we hew away, peace and joy may still elude us. That's the place so many of us AA oldsters have come to. And it's a hell of a spot, literally. How shall our unconscious—from which so many of our fears, compulsions and phony aspirations still stream—be brought into line with what we actually believe, know and want! How to convince our dumb, raging and hidden "Mr. Hyde" becomes our main task.

I've recently come to believe that this can be achieved. I believe so because I begin to see many benighted ones—folks like you and me—commencing to get results. Last autumn [several years back - ed.] depression, having no really rational cause at all, almost took me to the cleaners. I began to be scared that I was in for another long chronic spell. Considering the grief I've had with depressions, it wasn't a bright prospect.

I kept asking myself, "Why can't the Twelve Steps work to release depression?" By the hour, I stared at the St. Francis Prayer..."It's better to comfort than to be the comforted." Here was the formula, all right. But why didn't it work? Suddenly I realized what the matter was. My basic flaw had always been dependence - almost absolute dependence - on people or circumstances to supply me with prestige, security, and the like. Failing to get these things according to my perfectionist dreams and specifications, I had fought for them. And when defeat came, so did my depression.

There wasn't a chance of making the outgoing love of St. Francis a workable and joyous way of life until these fatal and almost absolute dependencies were cut away.

Because I had over the years undergone a little spiritual development, the absolute quality of these frightful dependencies had never before been so starkly revealed. Reinforced by what Grace I could secure in prayer, I found I had to exert every ounce of will and action to cut off these faulty emotional dependencies upon people, upon AA, indeed, upon any set of circumstances whatsoever.

Then only could I be free to love as Francis had. Emotional and instinctual satisfactions, I saw, were really the extra dividends of having love, offering love, and expressing a love appropriate to each relation of life.

Plainly, I could not avail myself of God's love until I was able to offer it back to Him by loving others as He would have me. And I couldn't possibly do that so long as I was victimized by false dependencies.

For my dependency meant demand—a demand for the possession and control of the people and the conditions surrounding me.

While those words "absolute demand" may look like a gimmick, they were the ones that helped to trigger my release into my present degree of stability and quietness of mind, qualities which I am now trying to consolidate by offering love to others regardless of the return to me.

This seems to be the primary healing circuit: an outgoing love of God's creation and His people, by means of which we avail ourselves of His love for us. It is most clear that the current can't flow until our paralyzing dependencies are broken, and broken at depth. Only then can we possibly have a glimmer of what adult love really is.

Spiritual calculus, you say? Not a bit of it. Watch any AA of six months working with a new Twelfth Step case. If the case says "To the devil with you," the Twelfth Stepper only smiles and turns to another case. He doesn't feel frustrated or rejected. If his next case responds, and in turn starts to give love and attention to other alcoholics, yet gives none back to him, the sponsor is happy about it anyway. He still doesn't feel rejected; instead he rejoices that his one-time prospect is sober and happy. And if his next following case turns out in later time to be his best friend (or romance) then the sponsor is most joyful. But he well knows that his happiness is a by-product—the extra dividend of giving without any demand for a return.

The really stabilizing thing for him was having and offering love to that strange drunk on his doorstep. That was Francis at work, powerful and practical, minus dependency and minus demand.

In the first six months of my own sobriety, I worked hard with many alcoholics. Not a one responded. Yet this work kept me sober. It wasn't a question of those alcoholics giving me anything. My stability came out of trying to give, not out of demanding that I receive.

Thus I think it can work out with emotional sobriety. If we examine every disturbance we have, great or small, we will find at the root of it some unhealthy dependency and its consequent unhealthy demand. Let us, with God's help, continually surrender these hobbling demands. Then we can be set free to live and love; we may then be able to Twelfth Step ourselves and others into emotional sobriety.

Of course I haven't offered you a really new idea—only a gimmick that has started to unhook several of my own "hexes" at depth. Nowadays my brain no longer races compulsively in either elation, grandiosity or depression. I have been given a quiet place in bright sunshine.

(also see: A Letter From Bill W. on Depression, from the memoirs of Tom Pike, an early California AA member, which is strikingly similar to this AA Grapevine Article, "The Next Frontier: Emotional Sobriety.")

<http://silkworth.net/aa/history/emotionalsobriety.html>

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Sixteen relapse symptoms to watch out for:

For any time, any place, any where !

1. Exhaustion - Allowing oneself to become overly tired; usually associated with work addiction as an excuse for not facing personal frustrations.
2. Dishonesty - Begins with pattern of little lies; escalated to self-delusion and making excuses for not doing what's called for.
3. Impatience - I want what I want NOW. Others aren't doing what I think they should or living the way I know is right.
4. Argumentative - No point is too small or insignificant not to be debated to the point of anger and submission.
5. Depression - All unreasonable, unaccountable despair should be exposed and discussed, not repressed: what is the "exact nature" of those feelings?
6. Frustration - Controlled anger/resentment when things don't go according to our plans. Lack of acceptance. See #3.
7. Self-pity - Feeling victimized, put-upon, used, unappreciated: convinced we are being singled out for bad luck.
8. Cockiness - Got it made. Know all there is to know. Can go anywhere, including frequent visits just to hang-out at bars, boozy parties.
9. Complacency - Like #8, no longer sees value of daily program, meetings, contact with other alcoholics, (especially sponsor!), feels healthy, on top of the world, things are going well. Heck may even be cured!
10. Expecting too much of others - Why can't they read my mind? I've changed, what's holding them up? If they just do what I know is best for them? Leads to feeling misunderstood, unappreciated. See #6.
11. Letting up on disciplines - Allowing established habits of recovery - meditations, prayer, spiritual reading, AA contact, daily inventory, meetings - - to slip out of our routines; allowing recovery to get boring and no longer stimulating for growth. Why bother?!
12. Using mood-altering chemicals - May have a valid medical reason, but misused to help avoid the real problems of impending alcoholic relapse.
13. Wanting too much - Setting unrealistic goals: not providing for short-term successes; placing too much value on material success, not enough on value of spiritual growth.
14. Forgetting gratitude - Because of several listed above, may lose sight of the abundant blessings in our everyday lives: too focused on # 13.
15. "It can't happen to me." - Feeling immune; forgetting what we know about the disease of alcoholism and its progressive nature.
16. Omnipotence - A combination of several attitudes listed above; leads to ignoring danger signs, disregarding warnings and advice from fellow members.

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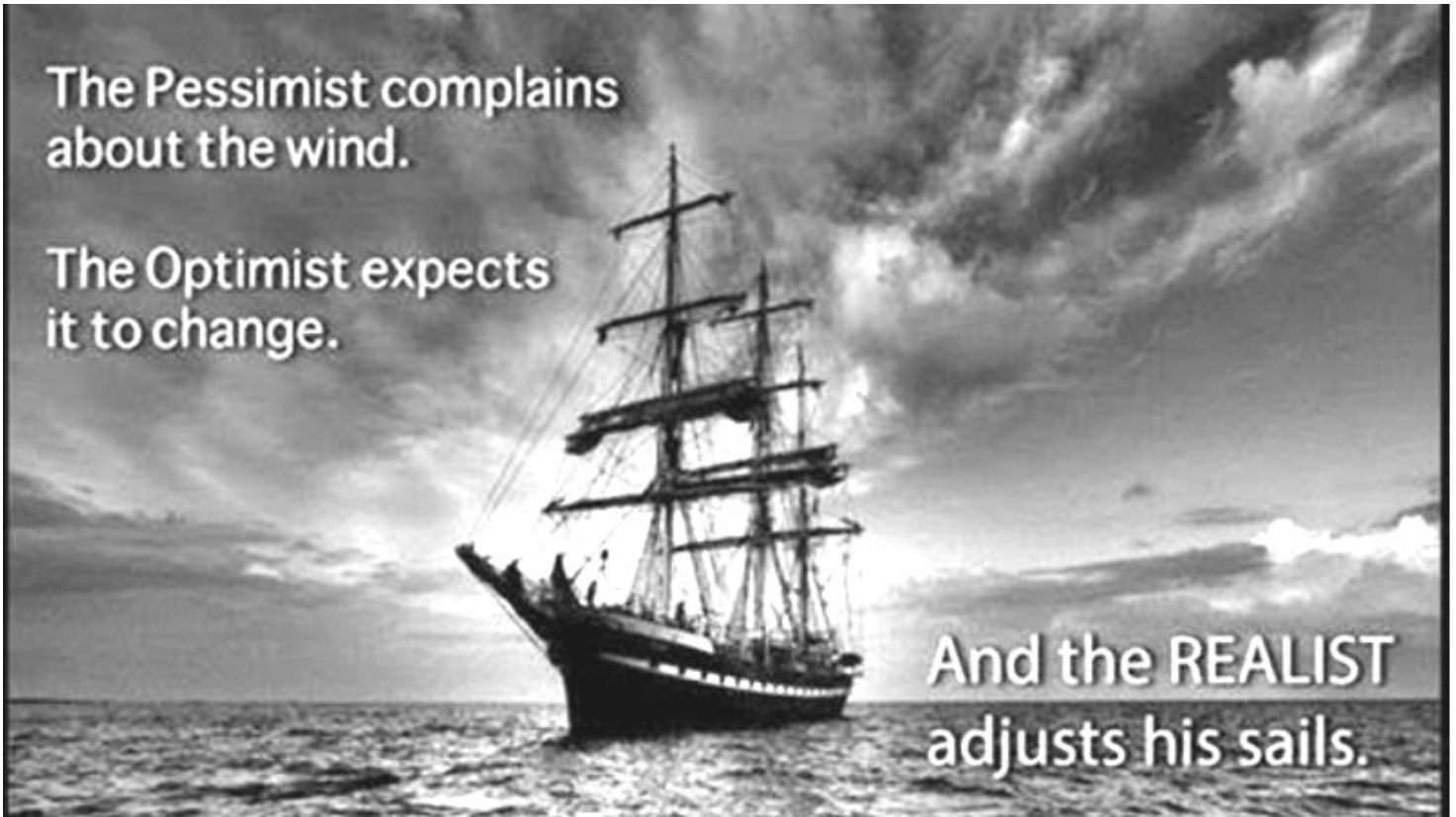
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on pump 1 please.

Bartender: get your
mouth off the keg sir.

Sometimes



My greatest
accomplishment is just
keeping my mouth shut.



December 2022



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